

No. 50.

THE  
**CHRISTIAN EXAMINER**  
AND  
**GENERAL REVIEW.**

NEW SERIES—No. XX.

MAY, 1832.

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## NOTICE.

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*Extract from the Preface.*

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THE  
CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.

N<sup>o</sup>. L.

NEW SERIES — N<sup>o</sup>. XX.

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MAY, 1832.

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ART. I. — *The Scriptural Interpreter.* Published Monthly.  
First Six Numbers. Boston. Leonard C. Bowles. 12mo.

WE wish we could place at the head of this article a good translation of the Scriptures with a popular commentary. There is absolutely nothing now so much wanted, for the promotion of religious knowledge and improvement, as a work of this nature. Controversy enough we have had; and a great deal more, we are inclined to think, than has been well understood by the body of the people; though we are very well satisfied with the result, as far as their inquiries have gone. But the more we are convinced of the unappropriateness of abstruse discussion for general reading, the higher value do we set upon simple exposition. Indeed an abstruse discussion upon the meaning of language, which is the ultimate resort of all Christian controversy, is the last task of hard reading, and requires, in fact, a degree, not commonly possessed, of learning and of mental accomplishment to do it justice. It is an investigation not of facts and principles only, not of thoughts only, but of the bearing and influence upon them of the most subtile and flexible instrument of thought. It is like the office of the judge, in not only summing up evidence, but in weighing the grains and scruples of the phraseology of the law that is applicable to it.

The translation, which we desire to see, should be accurate and simple, the result of much learning without making any parade of it, not afraid to depart from the language of the received version when the sense requires it, and yet not

ambitious of doing so without good reason. A happy example of this, we think, especially for the Old Testament, where less change is needed, is seen in Mr. Noyes's Translation of the Psalms, and of the Book of Job. The commentary should be the very reverse, in almost every thing, of Dr. Scott's,\* — learned, impartial, acute, brief, — never covering up a plain text with a mass of verbiage, never interposing to help the reader but when it is necessary, and then interposing in terms clear, explicit, and satisfactory. If Mr. Noyes will add to his translations a commentary equally acceptable, he will do what is needed for the Old Testament. For the New, we earnestly hope that those labors are in progress, which will give, in an accurate and just translation accompanied by an acute and popular commentary, a more valuable present to the body of the Christian world, than it has yet received from priest or layman, from any university or private study.

Meanwhile as a proof of the growing interest that is felt in spreading just ideas of the Scriptures among the people, we welcome the little work which is named at the beginning of this article. We give all due praise to the editor, that amidst the many and well-known labors of a life devoted to his profession, he finds time for superintending, and, with the help of his friends, sustaining this useful publication. Much of the commentary and many of the discussions are of a very interesting character, and happily fitted to remove those mistakes and obscurities that have so long marred and darkened the holy page. Like mists overhanging the fairest landscape, like earth overlaying the richest mine, popular misconceptions have hidden from most eyes, a world of beauty and wealth. It is, in truth, 'a land where *hidden* beauty lies.'

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\* The amazing success of this work seems to us to prove, more than it proves any thing else, the great want, the demand, there was in the public mind, for a popular commentary. We have known many, and presume there are thousands, very ill able to afford it, who have bought this diluted mass of second-hand criticism and Calvinistic speculation, because they were willing to go beyond their means to obtain the long and earnestly desired explanation of the book of books — the Bible. The disappointment of many, it need not be said, has been extreme; though a long and constantly lengthening advertisement of recommendations has sufficed to keep up the feeling that this is a great work. And a great work it certainly is!



Indeed, the interest with which the Scriptures should be regarded and read, is the subject on which we now propose to offer some remarks. We say both regarded and read; for although we intend to direct our observations chiefly to the latter point, the reading of the Bible, we would say something, in the first place, of the want of a due estimation of these writings.

There are those, doubtless, who think too much of the Bible as a mere book, who give their reverence too much to the very phraseology and form of the book, who forget that the letter killeth and that it is the spirit which maketh alive, — that they should go beyond the form in this as in every thing else, beyond the form of words, as they should beyond the form of ceremonies and rites; who forget that the love of the Scriptures is the means, in short, and not the end. A man should no more say, ‘How much I love the Scriptures!’ and stop short, content with that, than he should be content with admiring a book upon husbandry, or upon any art or trade, which it is his business to pursue. He should turn all he reads to account. He should go in the way to which the guide points, and not rest in admiration of the guide.

But admiration, barely so much as admiration, is, we fear, an unusual sentiment to be entertained about the Bible. The common feeling, it must be suspected, is one of considerable indifference, and would be one of much greater indifference, if it were not regarded with apprehension as a dark sign, in the experience of those who feel it. There are many who, but for this reason, would probably drop all reading of the Scriptures. There are some who do not read them, and who must defend their neglect on the ground, — to state it plainly, — that they do not think them worth reading. Their judgment, in fact, and a most ignorant and childish judgment it is, amounts to that. They have never given any intelligent attention to the Bible. They have no just comprehension of this most wonderful book, — most wonderful, whether considered as inspired or not inspired. A book containing the most ancient and authentic history and literature in the world; a book, whose records, — the fragments, at least, of whose records, — have come down to us from the oldest homes of the human race; a book which lifted up, amidst the debasement of universal idolatry, such lofty strains of devotion as have fed the

piety of the most refined ages; a book which gives us an account of the freest institutions of ancient times; a book filled with the most sublime and beautiful poetry that has ever been given to the world; a book in fine, marked, in its later records, with a moral grandeur, and sanctity, whose expression wrested from listening and even hostile auditories the exclamation, 'Never man spake like this man!' — such a book is the Bible! And now what is the conception which many, and some, too, who think themselves very wise in the matter, entertain of it? Why, it is a book, — we must speak with a freedom that pains our reverence for it, — it is a book, they think, they venture perhaps to say, of 'old wives' fables' and childish legends; a book about things long gone by, and dull, and indifferent; a book not worth reading. They have a confused impression that it is all about a weary journey in the wilderness, and about useless ceremonies, and fighting kings perpetrating strange cruelties, and an obstinate people full of vulgar ideas and barbarous usages, and strange stories passing all belief, and half-crazed prophets performing eccentric deeds and uttering maledictions and mysteries. This, this, we say, is the sort of blind and blundering conception which not a few have of the ancient Scriptures. Whether it is that all this was read much in childhood, or whether the intellect has always remained in a sort of infantile state about it, or whether the simplicity of an ancient style has deceived the people, — why it is, we do not altogether see, but it is certain, that all the venerable and sublime features of this body of ancient history, law, poetry, and prophecy, are brought down to the measure of an amazing childishness. The dignity of these writings is nearly lost to the mass of the people. Nor can we allow that a much wiser judgment is formed of the New Testament. Many suppose that the whole wisdom and weight of it lie in the more abstruse and obscure parts of the book; which, as they do not understand, they cannot really and heartily admire and honor; while they just as falsely imagine, that the more simple and practical portions of the record, the teachings of our Saviour, are so obvious, and already so well understood, as not to need much of their attention. And thus it comes to pass, for one reason or another, that the whole book is by many, not only not attentively read, but not looked upon as intrinsically deserving such regard.

We must pardon much to the unfortunate influences of education, much to want of knowledge. And this leads us to repeat, and we shall yet again reiterate, the call for popular exposition. If any one would write a book, — we do not now speak of a regular commentary, — but a book of disquisitions or lectures on the Old Testament, which should not be too learned, and yet the fruit of much learning, which should relieve the popular difficulties about such subjects as the creation, and the flood, and the building of Babel, and the age of the antediluvians, and the destruction of the Canaanites, and many things in the conduct of the patriarchs, he would do a most important service to the cause of religion. How often is an objection made with a very grave and ominous air of superior wisdom, to the inebriety of Noah, the treachery of Jacob, the anger of Moses, the wickedness of David, and even to the incorrigible obstinacy and folly of the whole nation of the Israelites, as if it concerned any body on earth, to defend them in those respects! How many things, too numerous here to mention, are referred to, as bearing an aspect of inconsistency, extravagance, or absolute incredibility, which are capable of easy explanation, from the customs of those ancient ages, or the natural history of those remote countries, or the peculiarities of their language! And how common is it, instead of looking upon these writings as an historical account of God's moral interpositions in behalf of men, to regard them, in substance and detail, as the express dictates and suggestions of divine wisdom, and therefore to regard that wisdom as responsible for every sentence and word, that is written in the Bible! Truly, armed with such a theory as this, 'the letter killeth.' It would kill all faith.

But we must not dwell longer on this depreciating estimate of the Bible, but proceed to take up a subject which is one, we think, of great practical importance, *the reading of the Scriptures*. In doing this, we propose to speak freely of the difficulties that attend it, and of their character, causes, and remedy.

There is scarcely any subject, we are inclined to believe, which the state of the general mind, at present, more earnestly calls into discussion than this of reading the Scriptures. When the Bible was denied to the laity, or when, in that revulsion of feeling which the Reformation produced,

the reading of it came to be regarded as one of the greatest privileges and duties, and men dared not to acknowledge to themselves, much less to others, that there were any difficulties in the way of the required interest in the Scriptures, the case was different. But in the freedom of thought and of speech which now exists, and which distinguishes our own times from the days of elder Puritanism quite as much as they were distinguished from the reign of the Romish hierarchy, there are not a few who admit to themselves, and some who acknowledge to others, that there are obstacles in their minds, if not distinct feelings of reluctance, to the reading of the Scriptures;—at least, to that extent and with that frequency which are commonly urged by their religious advisers. This feeling is commonly entertained, we believe, with pain, at least, by all serious minds; and we have known it to be entertained by very serious minds. To such it is a subject of regret and apprehension, that they are wanting in that love of the Scriptures, which is commonly stated as one of the most indispensable marks of piety.

There are others by whom a much stronger feeling, a feeling of absolute aversion is felt, and even carelessly felt, who regard their dislike of the Scriptures as one of the many indications of a character, which they have made up their minds to take and acknowledge as their own. Their aversion is founded on very different reasons, from the difficulties of the former class. The difficulties of the former may arise partly from familiarity with the Scriptures; the aversion of the latter arises from worldly neglect, from pride, and from the dislike of all reproof and religious impression.

Again, there are others who look upon both of these states of mind, with equal and unqualified reprobation, who have never been at liberty to reflect freely on this subject, and who therefore brand all deficiency in the enjoyment of the Scriptures, as a sign of spiritual deadness. They have never had the freedom of mind to suspect that such reluctance may have arisen from natural and reasonable causes. Prone to think every thing wrong, they have regarded all obstacles to reading the Bible as only added proofs of the common depravity.

It may therefore be for the benefit of all to enter into



some account of the causes which may have contributed to make the Scriptures less interesting than it is desirable they should be.

Something may undoubtedly be attributed, as a first cause, to the circumstance that in childhood the Scriptures are often read as a task. To a child, the reading of the Scriptures as a whole can scarcely be otherwise than a task. It is impossible that the Bible as a whole should be understood by a child; and therefore the reading of it must always be mechanical and ultimately irksome. The Romish doctrine of the uselessness and injurious tendency of reading the Scriptures, might, with some limitations at least, apply to children. Of what use can it be to them to read such books as Deuteronomy, or Leviticus, the obscure parts of the prophets, or the speculative parts of the Epistles? And how can the perusal of such portions of our sacred books fail to be uninteresting; and if uninteresting, then, a task; and if a task, then, an injury, not only for the time being, but, through the laws of association, an injury for years to come. The Bible, though it has interested the learned, the critical, the intelligently pious, beyond all other writings, comes to be permanently regarded as a dull book. The tasks of childhood become the drudgeries of maturer years, or, more likely, task and drudgery are laid aside, and profit and pleasure are foreclosed and lost, in the habitual neglect of the Scriptures.

But the influence of early association yields, as a cause of indifference to the sacred oracles, to another which we are now to mention; and this is, that men commonly read the Scriptures, without gaining any new, or any clearer ideas from them. Take for an illustration of this difficulty any given chapter of the Bible,—say a chapter of one of the Evangelists. Now here are some passages that are sealed up from the reader in an ancient idiom, in a strange phraseology; they are not understood, and of course are not interesting; nay, they create a distinct feeling of dissatisfaction, as all ignorance must. Again, there are other passages relating to ordinances and usages that have long since passed away, and these passages, therefore, are a dead letter. There is still, however, a part, and probably the greater part, that is intelligible; but this, again, is per-

fectly familiar. The chapter has been read a hundred times. The reader is acquainted beforehand with every word and with every obvious idea; with every idea, that is, which a cursory and careless reading is likely to give him. Now the Bible is not a magician's wand. It is a rational appeal to man's rational understanding. It is to affect his understanding as any other pious address would, and no otherwise. There is no charm in its words and phrases because they are the words and phrases of Scripture, that will necessarily rescue them from the ordinary effects of familiarity. There is no charm that will necessarily do this; but there is a habit of mind, as we shall soon undertake to point out, by which it may be voluntarily done. There are objects we know, which familiarity does not render indifferent, and the Bible may be such an object of regard as shall rescue it from all the ordinary effects of familiarity.

A still further cause of difficulty lies in a certain literal, slavish, and superstitious habit of reading the Scriptures; we know not how otherwise to express it. It is literal. It is a reading of so much; of so many verses or chapters, as if the merit or advantage of reading consisted in the amount read. It is a reading of so much, statedly, with very little regard to the sense, with more regard to the sum than to the sense; with no design, ever entertained, of pursuing out any one subject in the Bible. It is a slavish habit. It is reading the Scriptures for the sake of reading them, and not distinctly and intelligently for the sake of the advantage to be gained. The feeling of *duty* in this case is slavish. It is blindly submissive to a rule. The rule is,—the rule set up by all religious bodies, is,—that every Christian, every good man must read the Scriptures. He who would be a good man, then, feels that he must read them. It is a part, as he considers it, of his very profession and business, and a condition of his very hope, to read them. Now, the difficulty is, that he is too apt to rest in this simple feeling and the correspondent practice, without looking sufficiently to the ultimate objects and advantages, and without sufficiently considering how he is to secure those objects and advantages. And there are two feelings, let it be remembered, which can never enter into collision without difficulty; the feel-

ing that a duty is binding on the conscience, and the feeling that there is no good reason for it, — no sufficient object to be answered by it. We confess that we had rather remove the feeling of duty from the question of reading the Bible, than have it stand as a taskmaster to enforce a reluctant service. Such a service, in fine, must become superstitious; and it will bear that fatal mark of superstition, the substitution of the means for the end. The reading of the Bible will become, not a great means of piety, but itself a great work of piety; and thus perverted from its true and proper character, it must be, at length, despite of the zeal of superstition, a dull and irksome employment.

We have before referred to the case of moral aversion, — the hostility of a bad heart to the truths, the reproofs, and the warnings of the Bible; but it is unnecessary more particularly to dwell on this obvious state of feeling, since it is our purpose rather to address good and serious minds on this subject, — to address those whom we do not desire to reproach with any heinous wickedness, but to whom the duty we have to propose is that of surmounting a difficulty and of correcting an error.

The first remedy to be proposed is knowledge; knowledge, we mean, as including an understanding not only of the value and dignity of the sacred writings, of which we have already spoken, but of their general character, a distinct perception also of the ends for which they should be read, and an intelligent use of the necessary helps to a right comprehension of their meaning.

He who would read the Scriptures profitably would do well to reflect, in the first place, upon the kind of writings that claim his attention. The book before him is not, as the division into verses might lead him to suppose it is, — it is not a body of aphorisms, or of sententious paragraphs, where every verse or chapter by itself contains a complete sense, and where a single glance suffices to detect the meaning, or a few moments' reading, to master the subject. Neither does it consist, on the other hand, of a series of logical inductions, like the sections or chapters of a book of moral philosophy. There is philosophy in the Bible; the philosophy of human nature and of the nature that is divine; at once the most profound in its principles,

and simple in its precepts; the deep-founded and everlasting truth is there; but it is not philosophically developed; it has not the form of philosophy. On the contrary, the Bible is a collection of writings the most miscellaneous and desultory; of a cast as free and popular as that of any writings in the world. And while it thus gives the widest scope to all the peculiarities of mind and style, we are to remember, that the several ages which have so freely stamped their character upon the book are all ancient; that the manners, customs, and circumstances, which give their complexion to it, are those of distant nations; that the writers are all Oriental, foreign to us, — strange to us, in the aspect of some of their thoughts, and many of their modes of communication. While the substance of the communication is, indeed, sacred truth, and truth, as coming from God, of supreme interest, it is, nevertheless, mixed up with the history of various nations, with narratives of personal experience, details of ritual usages, allusions to contemporaneous events and circumstances; and from all these, the substance of the communication is to be extracted. It is not to be identified with them; still less is it committed by them, or pledged for their accuracy or propriety. Let it only be admitted that there have been interpositions of God for the moral guidance of an ancient people, that a light has thus been lifted up and borne onward amidst the nations, that the way of past generations has thus been marked with the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, and it matters little with what circumstances and facts the record of all this blended. The interposition surely is not, in the least, responsible for the conduct of those, for whom it was made. It is none the less certain or divine because it was surrounded by human errors and follies. As well deny the course of the sun through the heavens, or disparage its gladdening light, because mists and clouds rise up from the earth and sometimes obscure its path. Grant that the Bible contains accounts of bad men and of bad actions, of foolish and absurd superstitions, of vulgar prejudices and now useless ceremonies, of gross misdeeds, the relation of which may offend the taste of more refined ages; what is all this to the great manifestation, — the manifestation of one God of infinite perfection, and of his paternal interest for his hu-



man family! This bare fact admitted, we know not how it may be with others, but with us, this bare fact is one that sinks every thing else, in the history of all past times, to comparative insignificance. It is a fact which, admitted or even suspected, would lead us to open the Scriptures with sacred curiosity and profound reverence. We should 'ask for those old ways,' and for the footsteps of God in them, with far more eager inquiry than for all the treasures of ancient art and learning.

These views, we think, are needed as preliminary to an intelligent reading of the Scriptures. A blind veneration for them, which asks no questions, a superstitious and slavish reading of this book because it is the Bible, may not stand in need of any such views. As it seeks no sense, and has none, it may not require any to help it out. But he who would intelligently peruse this volume, must make this discrimination between the substance and the form. And, fairly making it, he will be neither disappointed nor offended at what he meets with; he will not find stumbling-blocks at every step. He will not wonder that the prophet, after having declared that 'the Lord said' thus and thus to him, should then go on and use language that appears to be low or familiar, or unworthy of the Infinite Majesty in whose name he speaks. He will not wonder at this, because he will understand that while the prophet delivers a message from heaven, he clothes it in a language of his own choosing, and for which his taste alone is responsible. He will not be shocked at those freedoms of an ancient and Oriental style, by which God's displeasure against the wicked is compared to an animal's rage or a man's revenge; by which it is set forth in a tone of menace, and even of pointed irony; he will not be shocked at this, because he will be aware that all this is mere style, and, as such, is human, and is designed to be considered as human and not as divine.

But we proceed to observe, that the general views which have been presented of the Scriptures will open to the intelligent reader another kind of discrimination; and that is of the different objects and ends for which they are to be read.

The light of revelation which seems to be sometimes obscured, as in the narrative of the historian or the dim visions of the seer, at other times shines forth clearly, as

in the devout meditations of the Psalmist, and in those sublime representations of God that break forth amidst the dark sayings of prophecy. These may be read for the mere purpose of devotional excitement. They are comparatively easy to be understood. Their general import may be comprehended without much labor of criticism, or protracted attention to the series of discourse. There are, in the Bible, golden sentences to meditate upon; a few of which will be sufficient to fill the mind with rich and holy themes, with bright and glorious thoughts. Doubtless there is something in the simplest passages that requires explanation. But we may take the sense, though the drapery of figure and illustration that clothes it, is not always simple nor easily unfolded. We may pluck the fruit, though the foliage of an eastern clime waves in rich and almost overshadowing luxuriance around it.

One part of the Scripture, then, — and in this we are to include the practical portions of the New Testament, — is comparatively plain. He that runs may read. He may read all that is essential to guide his course to heaven. But there is another portion which is not plain. And here the object in reading must be to investigate the sense; to gather the intent of the inspired teacher from the narratives, discussions, and descriptions of ancient ceremonies and institutions with which it is bound up. The investigation is to be pursued with patient attention to the course, whether of the history or of the argument, and the reader must avail himself of the helps which learning offers him.

And this brings us to the final and principal suggestion under the head of knowledge, as a means of remedying the difficulties that prevail with regard to the reading of the Bible, — the use of helps. It is impossible to understand considerable portions of the Epistles, of the prophecies, and even of the historical narratives of Scripture, without assistance from the labors of learned men, and a good deal of study besides. And we should not hesitate to recommend to those who cannot or will not use these means, to give their exclusive attention to the more simple portions of the sacred volume. There are such portions, doubtless, even in the more obscure books; as in the writings of the Prophets and in the Apostolic letters; here and there a chapter is practical. But, beyond these, a slight and cursory reading can-

not go into those books with any advantage. It is better to stop short. What lies beyond is out of the reach of the general and cursory reader, and we think he cannot be told so too soon or too plainly. Plato is scarcely harder to be understood than Paul. There are no moral disquisitions of ancient times, that are mixed up with circumstances so peculiar and so likely to involve them in obscurity to modern eyes, as the letters of the Apostles. And yet they are constantly read, with as little resort to means and helps for understanding them, as letters addressed to the American churches but yesterday would be, or as the yearly Epistles of the Friends are. Nay, even in these cases, one of another country or of another sect, would find a good many peculiarities in the turn of thought or of expression, that would require explanation. But what shades of obscurity must intervening ages have added to all such peculiarities! Thus, again, and still more emphatically, with regard to the Old Testament; it certainly would be as absurd to expect to understand the Justinian code without study, as to expect to understand the Mosaic code without study. The Commentaries of Michaelis on Jewish law are, at least, as necessary to be read for the comprehension of it, as the Commentaries of Blackstone on English law are for a like purpose. And yet, law, political economy, history, geography, poetry, philosophy, every thing, do men expect to understand, without any labor or preparation, because, forsooth, it is in the Bible!

It is better at once to confess the simple truth, and let the Papist on the one hand, and the unbeliever on the other, make what they can of it. Here is a body of writings, embracing momentous communications from God; this we believe; but there are dark passages, and clouds of obscurity in it, as there are in the other works of God. We may travel through the one as through the other, through the field of revelation as through the field of nature, by a clear and certain light; by a light that is poured down from heaven upon the whole land through which our journey leads; and if we would turn aside, as well we may, without the distrust of the Catholic, or the disbelief of the infidel, — if we would turn aside to examine the dark passage, or to penetrate the cloud of obscurity, we must apply ourselves as to a task, and employ the aids necessary to bring the in-

vestigation to a successful issue. If any one shall say, 'Why these obscurities?' it is sufficient to answer, that they are, from the very nature of the case, unavoidable. Moral teachings could not have been given to successive ages, adapted to their special wants, without becoming, in some particulars, obscure, as they become old. It might just as well be asked, why one language was not made universal and perpetual, and why the circumstances of all men in all ages were not made to be the same. If the successive revelations from Heaven were to contribute to the moral education of the world, they must have been just what they are.

But the difficulties, let us add, the most of them at any rate, are not insuperable. If we cannot find commentaries such in all respects as are to be desired, we can at least use such as we have. An ordinary exposition would impart much valuable information to the general reader; and the Commentaries of Locke, Bishop Pearce, and Kenrick,\* all of them together less voluminous than the single Exposition of Scott, are not ordinary, and could not fail to be useful.

Some general reading too of the proper books would clear up a multitude of passages, which to many are now worse than useless and uninteresting. It would be impossible, we think, to read such a work as Lowth's '*Lectures on Hebrew Poetry*,' without taking a new interest in the Psalms and the finest portions of the prophetic writings; or such a work as '*Campbell's Dissertations*,' prefixed to his Translation, without seeing new light and beauty in the Gospels; or any good treatise on Oriental customs and antiquities without feeling a new acquaintance with the Scriptures at large. And some of this reading is indispensable to any tolerable understanding of them.

We put it to the consistency, then, of those who profess a desire to be better acquainted with the Scriptures and

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\* We are less acquainted with Kenrick than with Locke and Pearce among the English expositors (upon whom, of course, we draw for instances), but we would not say any thing to the prejudice of what we understand to be a valuable commentary. In calling for a new commentary, we have had in view one which should be complete, and embrace a new translation, which Kenrick's work does not, and one especially that should cover the ground which his does not, where the principal difficulties and obscurities offer themselves to the unlearned reader.



more deeply interested in them, that they are bound to proceed more rationally and intelligently in this matter. How can they be thoroughly interested in what they but half understand! They ought to be willing to afford a little time and expense for purchasing and perusing those books, which will tend to illustrate the sacred oracles. They ought to give some of their reading hours to these subjects. They ought, at least, to employ in this manner some of the leisure hours of the Sabbath. If they could be induced to do this, they would find, in the very action of their minds, and in the enlargement of their knowledge, that the obscurities of Scripture had not been without advantage to them. They might come to think it was well and wisely ordered that in studying the records of their faith they should gain such an extensive acquaintance with the poetry and history, the philosophy and the arts, of the ancient world. It is time that we went beyond the measure of the old, technical, and almost childish ideas on this subject. We have got beyond authoritative restrictions on the use of the sacred volume. We are getting beyond superstition; and knowledge must come. The age demands it; the Bible demands it; religion demands it; and it will not be always withheld.

Knowledge, if not the chief remedy against indifference towards the Scriptures, is the one, nevertheless, which we have thought chiefly needing to be dwelt upon. The further suggestions to this end, which we have to offer, must be restricted in this article to a much narrower space.

Next in the natural order of means for reading the Bible with interest is *meditation*. Meditation upon the meaning of Scripture would open to us new views even of the most intelligible, practical, devotional parts of the Bible. Let this be illustrated in the simple instance of a passage which every one supposes himself fully to understand, — ‘God is love.’ The most hasty, careless, formal reader comprehends this passage, — that is, he comprehends one general idea, namely, that God is good. But to the contemplative and devout mind, in how many forms does this idea present itself, in how many relations! What grandeur and tenderness seem to him to belong to it! How does it spread itself out into thoughts of all the mercies of God! How does it connect itself with all things about him, and stretch to immensity and to eternity! Again, the negligent

reader finds it said, that man is prone to evil, and he admits the general fact of human sinfulness. But the mind that meditates, that thinks of its offences, carries this general truth into its many and humbling applications; and to such a mind the Bible seems to speak a new language. And thus, also, the precepts inculcating kindness, forbearance, meekness, are ever suggesting something new to the mind that really thinks of them. The language is the same, the truth is the same, but it appears in new aspects and relations.

And let it be observed, that it is in this way principally that we get new ideas on all subjects, especially on all moral subjects. The primary ideas are few, and are possessed by all. It is by new combinations of old ideas, it is by seeing new relations among them, by comparison, by illustration, that our knowledge advances. If it be asked why this progress may not be made by simply contemplating the ideas we have, the answer is, that reading the Scriptures is contemplating them, and that, too, with the best of aids, — that it is a means of presenting religious ideas (which is all that any book can do), that it gives us, moreover, the advantage of a guide. What else is to be said on this point resolves itself into the expediency of reading books of devotion; and of this, to most persons, we presume that there can be no doubt. Unless we are wiser and more devout than all those who have written upon religion, they certainly can teach us something. Nor would it be without advantage to read them, even if they did not; for one, and often the greatest, advantage of reading is, that it draws our mind to the subject. If it is expedient at all to read devotional works, then we maintain that the Bible is a better book of devotion than any other. And this, too, is the fountain of that light which shines through all others.

We revert, in this connexion, to one of the causes of indifference before stated. Men do not receive new ideas from reading the Bible. This, though not to be alleged as a positive and heinous transgression, is, nevertheless, a very serious mistake. It is a mistake about the proper manner and object of perusing the sacred volume. We read it cursorily, carelessly, perhaps. We read it, as has been already implied, as if reading were the great object; whereas meditating is the great object. We read it as a creed, as a set of dogmas, or a collection of curiosities; or we read it to

satisfy our conscience ; or we read it to see what it will say ; — but we know what it will say ; that is, we know all that it will say to the careless and negligent reader. If we were reading for the first or the fifth time, the case would be different ; but now we are acquainted with the general import of the Bible, at least with the general contents in its practical parts, and unless we meditate upon it, if we read only, we shall gain nothing farther of mere information. Our object, therefore, when we do not read as critics, is to make the Bible a book of devotion, to commune with its spirit, to reflect upon it, to consider and apply its sacred truths. Unless we do this, it will not be strange if we gain no new ideas. And if we gain no new ideas, or if the ideas we do receive are careless and negligent ideas, it will be still less strange that the perusal is irksome. From the very constitution of our minds, a recurrence of such ideas, without any variation, is tedious and wearisome.

We must briefly add, as a final means of acquiring a proper interest in the Scriptures, that they must be read not only with meditation, but with a feeling, an *experience* of those truths which they deliver. This is true, because the Bible addresses not the understanding, not the imagination only, but more especially the heart.

To the proper interest in the Scriptures, knowledge and reflection will contribute, but they will not necessarily produce it. There must be a feeling of our sinfulness, of our wants, of our dangers, — there must be sympathy in the expression of devout and grateful emotions, there must be a deep sense of what is spiritual and eternal, or the book that is wholly occupied and concerned with these things will be indifferent to us. This is the critical and the turning point in the whole matter. If we read the Scriptures with feeling, they will become more and more interesting to us, by the same law of association which makes them more and more indifferent to the dull and careless. It is just in this case, as it is with the use of prayer-books. The truly devout and earnest Catholic or Episcopalian will tell us, that his interest and pleasure in the Liturgy constantly increases, while the negligent and the formal find in the same service an increasing burden and weariness. We know it is common to say, that what is often seen is less felt. But this is not true of those things which deeply and permanently interest us. It

may be true of shows and sports, and passing novelties. But it is not true of our dwellings, of our families, of our friends. It is not true of any thing that enlists our strongest emotions. The miser is not less attracted by his gold the oftener he sees it. It does not weary him to count his treasures, piece by piece, though he is made not a whit richer by it. The merchant does not see with less pleasure his good ship that comes the twentieth time laden with a fortune for her freight; he does not rejoice in her less as she discloses her well known signal and form, in the distant horizon, and spreads her sail for the welcome haven. The father, the patriot, do not grow dull to the objects of their long solicitude and love. Our native soil and our homes become more dear to us, the more familiar they are. And he who has found the seeds of immortal life springing from the soil of holy truth, who, in the bosom of that blessed truth, has made the home of his affections, cannot be indifferent to the outward receptacle and structure, where the wealth and treasure of his heart are garnered up. No matter how rude the structure may seem in some of its parts, how various the forms and styles which the taste of different ages has given it, how venerable the marks of decay, the footprints of time upon its storied walls and in its hallowed recesses, — it will still be the dwelling of the soul, the abode of wisdom, the habitation of hope, the threshold of eternity.

We had intended here to close our observations. But it occurs to us, that it may appear to some of our readers, as if we had recommended a good deal of reading of the Scriptures, and considerable study too, and quite an apparatus of means for understanding them, without distinctly enough pointing out any sufficient and ultimate object. ‘Why, after all, should we read them much,’ it may be said. ‘We have no objection to reading a chapter occasionally, once in a week or once in a month; but why should we do any thing more? We already know and believe the great doctrines of revelation; they are continually taught from our pulpits; the Bible is not yet to reveal them to us; why then should we read it? It has already done its work for us; it has already announced its inspired message; why ask it to do more? The messenger has spoken; he has fulfilled his commission; why detain him?’



We answer, in the first place, because you do but half understand him. The message is, as yet, but half received into the hearts of men. There is deep wisdom still to be learned from the holy page. There is more light to break forth from it; the light not only of speculative truth, but of moral illumination. Now if the Bible be, indeed, God's message to the world, and that message is not fully understood, if its meaning is not entirely exhausted, can a word more be necessary to turn the believer's attention to it? He studies nature to learn the character of its Author; why shall he not peruse the Scriptures for the same purpose? As a scholar, he will study Homer and Plato; he sees reason enough for it; he looks upon it as a praiseworthy employment; why, as a religious man, shall he not study David and Isaiah? — why, as a Christian especially, shall he not commune frequently and familiarly with the instructions of that great Master, to the beauty of whose life, and the wisdom of whose teaching, no philosophy nor imagined excellence of the ancient world, ever approached near enough to bear one moment's comparison. Few readers of the New Testament, if any, yet understand the character of this wonderful being. Few or none yet comprehend all the wisdom, loveliness, harmony, perfection of attributes, that was in him, who is styled 'the brightness of God's glory and the express image of his person'; who is, therefore, himself a revelation of God. The man who could worthily and adequately speak of Jesus Christ, or who could speak more worthily and adequately of him than any other man, would draw from us an admiration and reverence such as we could give to no other man. And if this be not speaking extravagantly, if the revelation of God in the person and in the Gospel of Jesus Christ be not fully understood, surely it is not yet time to think of having read enough.

This, then, is the main answer to those who demand a reason for frequent reading of the Bible. It is God's revelation, and there is yet much to learn from it.

But there are two suggestions of secondary importance on which we wish to dwell a moment.

One will relate to the means by which the feeling of religion is to be made permanent and practical. And to this end, we say, that feeling must, if wisely directed, be attached to something besides abstract excellence. To love reli-

gion, to love virtue in the abstract, — this will not do for beings constituted as we are. Feeling, so directed, would be almost certain to die away. It wants something visible and tangible ; something outward to excite it to action, or to remind it of its duty ; something to be a representative or a memento of that which is loved. Friendship, for instance, could not easily sustain itself through years, without the countenance of a friend ; or without messages or letters from him ; or without those mournful relicts, through which, though dead, he yet speaketh. Our minds, in short, converse much with their objects through images, through symbols. The universe in which we are placed is one vast system of representation. All truth, though not originated in us, yet is mainly impressed upon us by emblems. The senses are thus indispensable helpers of the soul. Now, the chief signs of thought are words ; and he who would have certain thoughts often suggested or revived to him, would do well often to resort to the words that teach them. Such, to the religious man, are the words of Scripture. Such, too, are other books of religious admonition and devotion. Now it cannot well be doubted that he who should daily spread before him those words of holy teaching and exhortation, would be more likely to be reminded of his duties ; would be more likely to meditate, and to have all those great themes revived in his mind, which, as a religious being, he must so much desire to keep vigorous and vivid within him. The strongest sensibility about religion, without some culture of this sort, would be extremely apt to be dissipated into vagueness and vacancy. It would not be sufficiently brought to the point of distinct contemplation and direct action. How would it be with knowledge, we pray, if there were no reading ? What would become of the general intelligence of the community, whether it relates to the history, literature, geography, or general affairs of the world, if all newspapers and books were banished from our houses, or if they remained in them, only to lie unused upon the dusty shelf ? The general intelligence would remain for a while, but how vague would it soon become ; how little would it tend to the improvement of the mind ; how little would it prepare men to act on those great questions that concern the welfare of the world ! All this, it is evident, applies still more strongly to religion. And he who habitually, and

upon a set plan, neglects all religious books, the Bible included, ought, in consistency, to say that his religious improvement, his moral happiness, his highest dignity is a matter of no consequence; or he ought, by the same rule, to neglect all reading, and to care no more for knowledge, than he does for religion.

Possibly, some neglecter of the Scriptures will say that we have not touched the point of his defence at all; that we have not struck a blow upon the citadel that guards him; that the simple truth of the matter is, 'that his conscience is sufficient for his guidance, that if he will only follow that, it will be doing well enough, that religion is not in a book; that all religion, in fact, is within him.' Then shall we simply answer, that we desire to see some of this religion out of him. We are tired of hearing so much of this secret, this invisible religion, as an apology for the neglect of the outward means. A man might as well say that he has got life within him, and therefore will take no food. Is conscience, because it is an inward principle, therefore not to be cultivated, nor guided, nor strengthened? So is reason, so is memory, so is imagination an inward principle. Take now the case of reason, and see what the neglecter of its cultivation, on the ground of our objector, might say for himself. Why, 'that his knowledge is sufficient for his guidance; that if he will only follow that, it will be doing well enough; that reason is not in a book; that all reason, in fact, is within him!' What follows? Why, destroy the schools; destroy all books; destroy the press; and destroy, too, all the moral and intellectual hopes of the world.

But we must hasten to the other observation we intended to make; and that is, that a merely literary and critical attention to the Scriptures could not fail to have the happiest influence in refining, softening, and purifying the public taste, and the whole mind of a people. Some respectable writers have gone so far as to maintain that Hebrew literature ought to be introduced into our schools in place of the Greek and Roman classics. Without yielding to this opinion, we may at least say, that the literature of the Hebrews is, every way and eminently, deserving of attention. Such attention might be fairly excited by the fact, that a language so ancient, so meagre in its vocabulary, of a people so rude and uncultivated, and whose whole remaining literature is

bound up in a single volume of moderate size, — that such a language, under such circumstances, should have produced the most sublime and beautiful poetry, the most striking and touching descriptions of nature, the most moving strains of human joy and sorrow that are to be found in the world.

But there are marked peculiarities in the Hebrew writings which commend them, even as literary compositions, still farther to our regard. There is a loftiness of moral conception, a purity of thought in them; there is a perpetual recognition of man's relation to his Maker, making every song of victory a song of praise, and filling every strain of lamentation with the breathings of gentleness and submission; there is especially a tenderness pervading the compositions of the Hebrew poets, a desolate grandeur of sorrow for their suffering country, a pathetic mournfulness of pity for the woes which they denounced or described; a tone of affection too, a communion of heart with all the heroism and meekness of the highest and the humblest emotions; in short, there is throughout a character of moral sympathy, which must touch and kindle all the higher and purer feelings of him who partakes of it, and communes with it. Let us be told of any one, that he understands and feels the peculiar beauties of Isaiah, or of the Psalms, and we should set it down as one distinct pledge for his intellectual elevation and refinement.

It is full time, we are aware, that our remarks should be brought to a close. Our object has been one of humble pretensions; not to dilate upon the beauties of Scripture, which would have been a more attractive and exciting theme, but patiently, and with a careful hand, to remove something from that mass of misconceptions and prejudices which hide from most persons more than half of the glory of those venerable and sacred writings. It is an occasion for the most unaffected grief, if not astonishment, that ideas should prevail concerning these writings, so low, tame, and dull, so childish in fact and in fine, and in every way so utterly unworthy of them. May the time soon come when 'they shall read in the book, in the law of God distinctly, and give the sense, and cause the reading thereof to be understood.'

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ART. II. — *History of Scituate, Massachusetts, from its First Settlement to 1831.* By SAMUEL DEANE. Boston. James Loring. 1831. 8vo. pp. 408.

THIS is one of the fullest and most minute town histories that have come under our notice ; so full and minute, indeed, that some have objected to it on this account. They forget, however, that those who do not want such a history of Scituate, do not probably want any. It is a repository of facts and dates, and family sketches, and curious reminiscences, which will afford much pleasure and satisfaction to antiquaries, supply important materials to the future historian, and always be referred to as a book of authority on the subject, evincing extraordinary patience and diligence in its investigations, and a sound and unbiassed judgment in its conclusions. To the inhabitants of this ancient town, and to all who feel a personal interest in it, either from their vicinity, or because it was their birthplace, or that of their ancestors, such a work must be invaluable.

The following brief notices, collected from different parts of the volume, will help us to form some idea of the character, manners, and progress of the settlement.

'In 1667, "The Town did enact, that if any person should entertayn any stranger, after being admonished by a committee chosen for such purpose, he should forfeit and pay 10s. for each week." The preamble of this law runs thus : "Whereas some persons out of their owne sinister endes and by-respects, have too aptly been harborers or entertayners of strangers coming from other townes, by which meanes the Towne cometh to be burdened, &c." At the same meeting the Town declared by their votes, "that Mr. Black should depart the Towne presently." In what manner he had become burdensome or dangerous does not appear. We believe he was a preacher.

'In 1670, "The Town did agree that the Selectmen should be moderators in the Town meetings the present year; and if any person shall speake after silence is commanded, without leave from any two of the moderators, he shall forfeit 6d. for each offence."

'In 1665, "Whereas the Court did require, that every Town should have two wolf Traps, and the Town did conceive that there were Traps in the Town that would answer the Court's order, therefore the Town did agree with Thomas

Woodworth to tende them, and Thomas Woodworth did agree to baite them and tende them according as the Order of the Court doth require, and the Town is to allow him 10s. for this year besides the pay for the wolves there killed."

'In 1668, "The Town did agree and conclude that if any man did cut any thatch on the North River flats, before the 15th day of August, he should forfeit 10s. per day or part of a day to the Town's use;" also, "The Town did agree and conclude that if any man did cut more thatch in one day than would load three canoes, he should forfeit 40s. to the Town's use." It is probable that many buildings and perhaps some dwelling-houses were covered with the sedges of the flats at this date.

'In 1690, the Town chose Thomas Woodworth "Clerk of the market," and annually to the same office till 1711. In 1712, the same person was chosen "sealer of weights and measures," which we therefore understand to be but another name for the same office.

'In 1696, "The Town did enact, that every householder should kill and bring in six black birds yearly, between the 12th and the last day of May, on the penalty of forfeiting for the Town's use 6d. for every bird short of that number."

'In 1728, "The Town allowed as a bounty for each full-grown wild cat killed within the Town, 30s., and for each young one 10s." John Dwelly and David Hatch received the bounty that year.

'In 1739, "The Town chose Capt. John Clap and Samuel Clap to prosecute the law relative to the preservation and increase of deer." Capt. John Clap was chosen annually for the same purpose until 1775—and Constant Clap was chosen annually afterward until 1784.'—pp. 110, 111.

'August 1709, we find the following vote: "The Society impowered Mr Joseph Otis to finish the meeting house by pewing of it, and also to appoint two and two to a pew (*where they do not agree to couple themselves*) each couple paying the cost of building the pew." We believe this house was not plastered, for the following item appears in the parish accounts that year: "Allowed Joseph Bates 12s. for filling chinks in the meeting house."—p. 31.

'Slavery was practised to a considerable extent; but they had no occasion to import servants of this description, for they won them "with their sword and their bow." The wills of the first generation often make provision for Indian servants, but rarely mention an African slave. We have seen but one instance of this kind previous to 1690. Subsequently to 1700,

African slaves had pretty generally been purchased by the wealthy families: and the posterity of that race is now more numerous in this town, than in any other town of the ancient Colony.' — p. 151.

We copy the character given of Mr. Eells, as a favorable specimen of the New England clergy in the first half of the last century.

'There are a few aged people now living who remember him. They describe his person to have been of a stature rather above mediocrity, of broad chest and muscular proportions, remarkably erect, somewhat corpulent in his later years, of dark complexion, with large black eyes and brows, and of general manners rather dignified and commanding than sprightly and pleasing. He had an influence and authority amongst his people that none of his successors have exercised, and which may have been in some measure a peculiarity of earlier times than these. The controversy with which his predecessors had been agitated had ceased. The Quakers, by not being persecuted here, had become quiescent. Whitfield's New light, and his spirit of denunciation had been kept out of his society, by the determined stand which he took against him; and the times were prosperous and happy. His people were delighted to see him at their doors, as he rode up on horseback to inquire after their health, and to hand his pipe to be lighted. We mean no satire by recording this trifle; for he was a venerable man, and so beloved, that every parishioner would take pleasure in performing such an office for him. He was also a leader amongst the neighbouring clergy,—well acquainted with the constitution and usages of the Churches, weighty in counsel, and often called to distant parts of the State, and to other States on Ecclesiastical Councils. As a preacher, there is reason to believe that he did not so much excel as in his dignity of character and soundness of understanding. We have seen a volume in manuscript of nearly an hundred sermons, which he used to carry with him when he travelled abroad. They embrace a considerable variety of subjects, and enabled him to preach at any time and on any occasion. They begin with his own ordination sermon, which he himself preached, according to ancient custom, and include the sermons which he composed during the few first years of his ministry. Were we to judge of his talents from these alone, we should not do him justice. There are a few discourses in print which are very respectable productions, and in particular those delivered

at the ordinations of his two sons. He preached the Election sermon in 1743, (Deut. xxxii. 47.)

'His sentiments were the moderate Calvinism of that day; we have seen one sermon on the doctrine of election, which had many explanations closely bordering on Arminianism. In the latter part of his life he continued to speak of Arminian free will as an error, but with no asperity. Mr. Lemuel Bryant of Quincy, who had gone somewhat before the age in liberal speculations, preached for him on a certain day, and delivered a sermon which he afterwards printed, (on the text, "All our righteousnesses are filthy rags,") and explained the text in the manner which would now be generally acceptable, showing that the formalities of a corrupt generation of the Jews were therein described, and not the moral virtues of true worshippers, which led Mr. Eells to say, "Alas! Sir, you have undone to-day, all that I have been doing for forty years," and Bryant with his accustomed wit and courtesy replied, "Sir, you do me too much honor in saying, that I could undo in one sermon, the labors of your long and useful life." An aged and highly intelligent gentleman, who related this anecdote to us twenty years since, also remarked that Mr. Eells preached a series of sermons afterward, with a view to correct Mr. Bryant's errors, but it was not easy, remarked the same gentleman, to discern much difference between his doctrine and that of Mr. Bryant. On the whole, we believe there has rarely been known a ministry of forty-six years, which so many circumstances conspired to render successful and happy. There are a few now living that remember the solemn day of fasting and prayer, kept by his people, on account of his death.' — pp. 198, — 200.

A particular and interesting account is given of Dr. Barnes, Mr. Deane's immediate predecessor, from which we give a single extract.

'His ministry continued in a good degree of quiet from the troubles of religious dissensions almost to the last. A short time before his death, the spirit of fault-finding began to move, and a stricter mode of Calvinism began to call for a separation, but had produced no great effect during his life. We believe he was remarkable for his meekness in "instructing those that opposed," and by parables, rather than by direct argument, he was accustomed to converse with such. A neighbour who was a Calvinist of the *straitest sect*, having frequently spent long sittings in arguing with Dr. Barnes, was finally answered by the following parable:



“ You, Sir, are a gentleman, to whom the public feels and acknowledges much obligation for your mechanical skill and inventions. Now we will suppose that your powers should be so far increased that you could make intelligent beings, and that you should produce thousands each day, formed with all the endowments of the human race. Then suppose that your neighbours should inquire, what destination you proposed for these beings; and you should reply, that you had prepared a place of torment to which you proposed to condemn the greater part, — not for any personal offence against you, but because you had made them for that end; and that the remaining few you had destined, in the same arbitrary manner, to another place of perfect happiness, which you had also prepared. Now, Sir, suppose that your neighbours were furnished with the common sense of mankind, concerning justice and goodness in the administration of one being, who has a controlling power over other beings, would they not knock your shop down, and say that such a wicked trade should not go on ? ” — pp. 204, 205.

Scituate has been the birthplace or home of several laymen of distinction, among whom we may mention particularly the venerable Hatherly, its founder and one of its principal benefactors, General Cudworth, Vassall, the Wantons, and the Cushings. The elder Wanton was a strict Quaker; but not so his fiery and adventurous sons, of whom Mr. Deane has collected the following curious memorials.

‘ William (son of Edward) began his distinguished course by stepping out of the rules of his religious sect, and performing some distinguished military exploits; and in the narrative of these exploits the name of his brother John must be associated with that of William. In 1694, when William was at the age of 24, and John at 22, a pirate ship having committed several robberies in the Bay, in which the family property had suffered losses, these two young men headed a party of volunteers, and captured the pirates, and carried them into Newport, where they were executed. Again in 1697, just before the peace of Ryswic, during the troubles with Count Frontenac, Governor of Canada, a French armed ship had taken several prizes in the Bay: and again William and John Wanton fitted out each a vessel from Boston, well manned with high-spirited volunteers, and admirably accomplished their design. It is said that William ran under the stern of the French ship and wedged her rudder, while John and his party boarded. Whether this method of embarrassing the Frenchman were practica-

ble or not, we do not know; we only state that this is a part of the fireside narrative, that has been handed down. It is also said, that the venerable Edward endeavoured to dissuade his sons from this enterprise as unlawful, according to the rules of their church; but on finding their determination fixed, he thus addressed them. "It would be a grief to my spirit to hear that ye had fallen in a military enterprise; but if ye will go, remember that it would be a greater grief to hear that ye were cowards."

'The fame of this exploit reached England, and when the two Wantons went to England in 1702, they were invited to Court, and Queen Anne granted an addition to their family coat of arms, and presented each with two pieces of plate, with proper devices, namely, a silver punch bowl and salver. These pieces of plate are said to have been stolen from their houses at Newport, during the raging of the mobs in the political contest of Hopkins and Ward, with the exception of one piece, which is now said to be extant in Newport.

'We now proceed with William. He left Scituate 1704, and settled in Newport. He had previously married Ruth, the daughter of Deacon John Bryant, senior. To this match, there had been several objections; the Quakers disapproved of his marrying out of the Society, and the Congregationalists of his marrying into theirs, and moreover the woman was very young; however, the sanguine temper of Wanton was not to be foiled, and he is said to have addressed the young woman in the presence of her family in the following words: "Ruth, let us break away from this unreasonable bondage. I will give up my religion, and thou shalt give up thine, and we will go to the church of England, and *go to the Devil together.*" They fulfilled this resolution, so far as going to church and marrying, and adhering to the church of England during life.' — pp. 373, 374.

We hope that Mr. Deane's example will be followed by other clergymen living in the interesting and beautiful villages scattered throughout the country. Their education, tastes, and pursuits must be supposed to fit them peculiarly for collecting such historical notices. Above all, however, let them be minute, exact, and full. Our principal objection to the work before us is that so little is said of the natural history of the place, and of its natural capabilities and peculiarities. If it had been necessary, we could have spared for this purpose twenty or thirty pages from the 'Family Sketches.'

[For the Christian Examiner.]

ART. III. — *Conclusion of the Second Letter on the Meaning of Αἰών in ancient Greek.*

WE now come to the passage in Plato's *Timæus*, containing four instances of *αἰών*, and three of *αἰώνιος*; also one of *διααἰώνιος*, which may be allowed to pass among the rest; due regard being had to the prefix *διά*. All these occur in one paragraph, occupying little more than two pages. It was mistakenly printed *seventy* pages in my last; and the error was overlooked, till it was too late to correct it.

There is no fairer way of presenting these words, in their connexion, than by producing, at once, the passage at large in which they appear. This I now do; numbering the instances of either word as they occur, for the sake of more ready reference in commenting upon them, should such reference be necessary.

Plato, having described the formation of soul, and corporeal nature associated with, and pervaded by it, proceeds to say, *Timæus* p. 37 C., *As the generating father contemplated this generated resemblance of the eternal [αἰδίων] Gods, moved and living, he was well pleased; and, being glad, he bent his mind on making it still more perfect according to the paradigm. As that, therefore, is an eternal animal [ζῶον αἰδίων], he took in hand to finish this universe as much like it as possible. But, then, the nature of the animal is EXISTENTIAL [1]; and this, indeed, to the generated, altogether, it was not possible to affix. But, he contrived in mind, to make a certain movable image of EXISTENCE [2]; and, ordaining the heaven, at the same time, he made an EXISTENTIAL [3] image proceeding according to number, of EXISTENCE [4] abiding in one; this which we have now named time; [ἡ μὲν οὖν ζώου φύσις ἐτύγγαεν οὕσα αἰώνιος. Καὶ τοῦτο μὲν δὴ τῷ γεννητῷ παντελῶς προσάπτειν, οὐκ ἦν δυνατόν· εἰκόνα δ' ἐπιροεῖ κινητὴν τινα αἰῶνος ποιῆσαι, καὶ διακοσμῶν ἅμα οὐρανόν, πλεῖ, μένοντος αἰῶνος ἐν ἐνὶ, καὶ ἀριθμὸν ἰούσαν αἰῶνιον εἰκόνα, τοῦτον ὃν δὴ χρόνον ὠνομάξαμεν.] days, also, and nights, and months and years, which were not, before the heaven was generated; and so, at once, with the same constitution, he fabricated their generation. And all these are part of time. And both it WAS, and it WILL BE, the forms of generated time, we ignorantly refer to the eternal [αἰδίων] essence, not correctly.*

For, we say now that it WAS, it IS, and also, it WILL BE. Whereas, it IS, is alone appropriate to it, according to true speech. But, it WAS, and it WILL BE, is proper to be said, concerning a generation proceeding in time. For both are motions. But, that which constantly subsists according to the same [τὸ δὲ αἰεὶ κατὰ ταὐτὰ ἔχον], immovably, cannot ever be properly made either older or younger. It has neither been already generated, nor will be hereafter. And altogether any generation has affixed nothing to those which are borne in sense. But these are generated forms of time which imitates EXISTENCE [4], and is circularly revolved according to number [ἀλλὰ χρόνον ταυτὰ αἰῶνα τὲ μιμουμένου καὶ κατ' ἀριθμὸν κυκλομένου, γεγεννηεν εἶδη]. And, with them, still, these things are so; and what has been generated, is what has been generated; and what is now being generated, is what is being generated; and that which will be generated, is what will be generated; and that which is not, is the nonentity; neither of which expressions, is strictly correct. But then concerning these things, there may not be a fair opportunity, at present, to discourse accurately. Time, then was generated together with the heaven; that having been generated together, together also, they might be dissolved; if ever there should be any dissolution of them; and according to the paradigm of the EXISTENTIAL [6] nature, that it might be as much like it as possible. But, truly, that paradigm is a being with respect to entire EXISTENCE [7]; but, this in turn, being generated continually, with respect to entire time, is both being, and being to be, alone [καὶ κατὰ τὸ παράδειγμα τῆς αἰωνίου φύσεως· ἢ ὡς ὁμοιότατος αὐτῷ κατὰ δύναμιν ἢ. τὸ μὲν γὰρ δὴ παράδειγμα, πάντα αἰῶνα ἐστὶν ὅν· ὁ δ' αὖ διὰ τέλους τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον γεγονώς τε καὶ ὢν καὶ ἐσόμενος ἐστὶ μόνος].

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According to these things, and for their sake, whatever of the stars were generated moving through the heaven, have turnings; that this might be most like the most perfect and intelligible animal, with the imitation of the PERVADINGLY EXISTENTIAL [8] nature [πρὸς τὴν τῆς διαίτητος μίμησιν φύσεως]. And, indeed, the other forms he fabricated unto the generation of time, according to a similitude to that, to which each is assimilated.

Every instance of *αἰών* and *αἰώνιος* in Plato's works has now been produced, On all, excepting those in the paragraph



just quoted from the *Timæus*, sufficient comment has been made. This passage is peculiar on many accounts, and requires observation at large. In remarking upon it, therefore I observe ;—

I. The immediate verbal connexion, in which αἰὼν and αἰώνιος occur, in the respective sentences, does not very positively mark the precise sense in which the author employed them. Admitting the different meanings of these words [EXISTENCE and EXISTENTIAL], which have already been stated ; we might, in each of these sentences, make use, in translating, of any one out of several of them, without doing great violence to the immediate verbal connexion. So that, if we regard nothing but this single circumstance, little positive dependence could be placed on these few instances alone, for establishing the certain meaning of αἰὼν and αἰώνιος in ancient Greek.

It, therefore, becomes requisite, to take a more extensive view of the case ; and consider these words with reference to the general subject on which Plato was writing, the known habit of his mind and all the circumstances relating to the treatise in which this paragraph appears. These may afford much help, in ascertaining the particular meaning in question.

It is plain, that Plato employs αἰὼν [EXISTENCE], in this particular place, with reference to some subject, different from that, in regard to which he had employed it before. The *existence*, which he here contemplates, is something different from *human life* ; the only subject previously expressed by αἰὼν, in his acknowledged works.

It is desirable to ascertain, so far as we may, what this particular subject was, which, in this place, he intended to express by αἰὼν [EXISTENCE], and with reference to which, he made use of the adjective αἰώνιος [EXISTENTIAL].

I trust it will be admitted, as not only within all rules of philology, but, also, as required by them, that the adjective be considered as depending, entirely, for its meaning, on the noun ; until evidence appears, that it has acquired meanings for itself ; and with proper regard to the nature and character of these parts of speech, severally. I, therefore consider, that αἰώνιος [EXISTENTIAL] signifies such relation to αἰὼν [EXISTENCE] as the circumstances, in each instance, severally indicate.

The question, therefore is, what was that *existence*, which Plato was here contemplating, under the name *αἰών*?

As in modern days, a sense of *duration*, and particularly of *eternity*, is generally believed to have belonged to this noun, and the meaning, *eternal*, to its adjective, in ancient Greek; respect for public opinion requires the question to be discussed,—whether Plato, in this passage, employed these words in this sense? Therefore

II. I cannot believe, that Plato was contemplating *eternity*, considered as limitless *duration*, under the name *αἰών* [EXISTENCE], nor *eternal* under the name *αἰώνιος* [EXISTENTIAL], for the following reasons;—

a.) We have the whole evidence of seven Greek writers, extending through about six centuries, down to the age of Plato, who make use of *αἰών*, in common with other words; and no one of them ever employs it in the sense of *eternity*. Indeed, it is more than doubtful, whether they ever employ it in any meaning of *duration* at all, saving so far as every *existence* has some kind of endurance. They clearly use this word with reference to the nature of the subject, without particular reference to its duration; never in the sense of eternal duration. It will be recollected, also, that their usage of the word has been produced, not in one or two instances *alone*, but in *every* case in which it occurs in their extant works, saving a few short pieces or fragments of some of them. We have, therefore, not only their evidence, but, it may be said, their *whole* evidence. And, so far as negative testimony avails, it is conclusive evidence, that there was no such meaning in the word. It is not to be supposed then, that Plato should have used it in that sense; if he intended, as he doubtless did, to be understood by his readers. We are under obligation to look in his writings for a meaning in *αἰών* relating to the nature or state of the subject, before we can be justified in admitting one, that relates only to its *duration*; still less can we, without manifest necessity, admit a sense of duration so immense as that of *eternity*.

b.) Aristotle defines this word at much length; and assigns it, as a general meaning, EXISTENCE, and also LIFE; or, *that which exists*, and *that also which lives*. He teaches also, that *human life* is *αἰών* and that the *completeness* of the universe is *αἰών* [an EXISTENCE]; comprehending, indeed,

the term of duration, among the other qualities of the αἰὼν [EXISTENCE] in question; but having no more special reference to that quality than to any other.

Had this word contained, in itself, so important a meaning as *eternity*, he could not have so passed it by. His silence on this head, together with his positive assertions in other respects, makes it clear, that this word, in his age, did not express *eternity*; but merely, an *existence* of any sort.

Now, Aristotle was the cotemporary of Plato, and had been his personal disciple. Had his master employed this word in the important sense of *eternity*, he could not in common fairness, have failed to notice it. Neither could Plato have been justified, in making use of the word in a sense before unknown, without giving information of the new meaning he was attaching to it. He was too honest to do this; and I do not believe that he did it.

c.) Plato himself employs αἰὼν, elsewhere, in the sense of human *life*; precisely as we often do the English word *existence*; and in no other senses, unless the Axiochus be admitted as his work; in which latter case, it may be said, that he employs this term, in the sense of human *life*, and of *completeness*, and in none other. It is inconceivable, then, that, in this single paragraph, he should have intended to express *eternal duration*, by a term, which he, every where else, employs in the simple sense of *existence*, or *life*, or a *completeness*, without reference to any *duration* at all.

d.) Plato employs the adjective αἰώνιος [EXISTENTIAL], elsewhere, twice. The first of these instances independently of the connexion of this adjective with its noun, affords no precise testimony as to what the term may or may not mean. But taken in connexion with the parent noun, and with the circumstances of the case, it seems to refer, much more aptly, to the *complete* and *absorbing* nature of the subject, than to its *duration*.

In the second of those instances, he sets the αἰώνιον [EXISTENTIAL] in contradistinction to the ἀνώλεθρον [INDESTRUCTIBLE]. This he could not have done, had he understood αἰώνιος to signify *eternal*. The indestructible is, certainly, the *eternal*, at least, *a parte post*; which is the most, as to duration, to which the sentence can be understood as referring. It follows, of course, that the opposite of the indestructible cannot be the eternal. And so, this second instance helps

to establish the meaning of the first. The sense of *completeness* answers the context well in either case ; but that of *eternity* would be incongruous in the one, and therefore is not to be admitted in the other.

If, then, he employed this adjective in these non-*eternal* meanings, every where else, it is not to be imagined, that in the solitary paragraph in the *Timæus*, he meant it should express eternal. In truth, in neither of the other cases, does it seem, fairly, to signify any *duration* ; and there is no reason why it should be understood as signifying any *duration* here.

e.) Plato, in the very paragraph in question, calls *χρόνος* [*Chronos*] commonly translated *Time*, 'an *EXISTENTIAL image of EXISTENCE*' [*αἰῶνος . . . . αἰώνιον εἰκόνα*]. Did he mean to say, that time is an *eternal* image of eternity ? — *Time*, in the common meaning of the word, is the opposite, and not the image of eternity. He must have understood something different from eternity by *αἰών*, when he called *χρόνος* its image.

I think, however, that by *χρόνος*, he did not understand *time*, considered as *lapse of duration* ; *measured duration* ; or the *measure of duration* ; but, created or generated *being*, considered as in *apparent order of succession* ; as we sometimes do when we speak of *time*, and mean by it the sum of those things which are born and die, rise and fall, appear and vanish away, seemingly to us one after another ; not possessing a *constant* existence, [*οὐ σπουδὴν ἔμπεδος αἰών*]. But, in this sense, likewise, it would be inconsistent to call *Time* an '*eternal* image of eternity' ; although it may properly be called an image of that *existence* which Plato was contemplating under the name *αἰών*. On this I may say more hereafter. But, at present, I must consider the sentence as decisive, that *αἰώνιος* does not mean *eternal*, nor *αἰών* *eternity*.

f.) The context, in no case, requires a sense of *eternity*, nor even of *duration* of any kind to be attached to either of these words. The most that can be argued in favor of such a rendering would be a bare possibility, that, in *some* of the instances, such a meaning might not be inconsistent with the immediate verbal connexion, in which the words occur ; although, in other instances, it would be incongruous.

Now, after the foregoing 'copious' exhibition of the habits of *αἰών* in ancient Greek, something more than a bare possi-



bility must appear, before we can assign to these words, in either of these cases, a meaning, which nowhere else belongs to them ; which the context, in these cases, does not require ; and which the context, in associated instances, positively forbids. ‘It is a sound rule in philology, “never to depart from the *ordinary* sense of a word, unless the context imperiously demands it.”’\* By the *ordinary*, I understand the *habitual* meaning of a word in the age of the writer under consideration. The *habitual* meaning of αἰών, in ancient Greek, has already been shown, in *propria personâ*, so far as the present examination extends. That *habitual* meaning is *existence* and *life*. And there is nothing in the context in this paragraph which requires a departure from this habitual meaning of this word, or the affixing to it the then *unknown* sense of *eternity*. Contrariwise, there are instances in the paragraph itself, in which such a meaning would be altogether inconsistent with the context. It is, therefore, a plain duty not to depart from the habitual sense of αἰών, already ascertained, nor to adopt this new and hitherto unknown one. It would be changing the whole habit of the word without necessity ; without a right to do so ; and in contradiction to the evidence of the very paragraph in hand.

g.) The habitual meaning *existence*, in one or another of its forms and modes of import, corresponds well to αἰών, in every instance, in this paragraph ; and a sense of *reference to the EXISTENCE* intended, in some form or other, corresponds equally well to αἰώνιος, in each of these cases. We may adopt any one out of several of the meanings of these terms, *existence* and *existential*, and use it consistently, in translating these Greek terms.

I am, therefore, in duty bound to reject a meaning in these words so incongruous as that of *eternity*, with the *habitual* usage of αἰών in Plato’s age ; with the definition of this word by Aristotle, his cotemporary ; with the plain sense of the term in other parts of Plato’s works ; and with some of the instances in this very paragraph. And this the more especially, when the then ordinary meaning of αἰών [EXISTENCE] corresponds to the context without effort.

Still, as has already been remarked, it is exceedingly

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\* Stuart’s Appendix, p. 154.

desirable to ascertain, so far as we can, the particular subject, or the *kind of existence*, which Plato was here contemplating; and which, in this singular paragraph, he intended to express by *αἰών* [EXISTENCE]; with reference to which, also, he made use of the adjective *αἰώνιος* [EXISTENTIAL]. The opinion of an insulated individual is of no great consequence, on such a subject, I know. Nevertheless, one may be allowed to say what he thinks; and, therefore,

III. I believe that Plato, in this place, understood by *αἰών*, that which vitally comprehends, as one, those subjects which he calls, at different times, by the name *ἰδέα, εἶδος, ὅν, ἀεὶ ὄν, τὸ κατὰ ταὐτὰ καὶ ὁσάντως ἔχον, κ. τ. λ.*—*idea, image, being, constant being, that which subsists according to sameness and in the same manner, &c.*; considering the comprising existence as a vital monad or unit; not as being *composed* by means of their collective multitude, but as embracing them, and being present to them; the comprehensive principle of their subsistence, uniting and holding them as one; an all-embracing vital completeness.

How near this comes, in our apprehension, to the Divine Being himself, I will not say. But Plato meant something different by it. He meant, rather, what may be called *spirituality*, with more propriety than by any other name. It is the *spiritual receptacle*, or *vital realm*, the *spiritual dwelling* of all that may be considered as *constant being*; and he considered no being as *constant* [ἀεὶ], excepting those spiritual subjects which he styles *ἰδέα, κ. τ. λ.* That which vitally comprises the wholeness of these as one, he calls, by way of eminence, in this place, *αἰών* [EXISTENCE]; and, in order to express reference to this monadic *spirituality*, he employs the adjective *αἰώνιος* [EXISTENTIAL].\*

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\* 'Αἰών' [EXISTENCE], says Proclus, commenting on Plato, (if I apprehend him right through Taylor's translation,) 'is infinite *life*, at once total and full, or the whole of which is ever present to itself.'

Harris, in his *Hermes*, Book ii. Chap. 5, presents an idea, which may help to elucidate the sense in which I here employ the term *spirituality*; 'God is, and LIVES. So we are assured from the Scripture itself. What then may we suppose the DIVINE LIFE to be? Not a life of sleep as fables tell us of Endymion. If we may be allowed then to conjecture, with becoming reverence, what more likely than a PERPETUAL ENERGY of the PUREST INTELLECT ABOUT THE FIRST ALL-COMPREHENSIVE OBJECTS OF INTELLECTION ITSELF, WHICH OBJECTS

Precisely what Plato understood, in the names beforementioned, has been made, and still remains a question among the learned; some conceiving he meant one thing and some another. But the different suppositions of his meaning, which have obtained any considerable currency, may be reduced to the following;—

1. *Abstract ideas*, or *intellectual images* of that which is essential to constitute species. The *idea*, or *intellectual form*, of that which every individual of a certain species must have in order to be one of that species; and which if any individual have, it is, thereby, one of that species.\*

Take, for instance, the abstract idea of *sphere*. Individual spheres may be large, small, diaphanous, opaque, hard, or soft; they may vary in color, and in many other modes; but they must all possess the one same thing which the mind conceives as *sphere*. This intellectual image, or abstract idea, is invariably the same in them all. This, therefore, is the *ιδέα, ἀεὶ ὅν, κ. τ. λ.* of the species *sphere*;—and so in regard to other forms of being.

Now, every abstract idea is spiritual. It exists only in *that*, which may properly be called *spirituality*; whether we be contemplating the spirituality of God, man, or any other intellectual being. Abstract idea is a spiritual thing, and is discernible by spirit only.†

That which embraces all abstract ideas in one, is *spirituality*, in the extensive sense; and is what Plato, in this place means by *αἰὼν* [EXISTENCE], if, by his *ὅντως ὄντα*, he intends *abstract ideas*.

Further, as, in his view, all generated things proceed from these ideas abiding in one *αἰὼν* [EXISTENCE] as the monad;

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ARE NO OTHER THAN THAT INTELLECT ITSELF? For in pure INTELLIGENCE, it holds the reverse of all sensation: that the PERCEIVER and the THING PERCEIVED are always ONE and the SAME.' His idea of spirituality is far more simple than that of Plato; but it may help to elucidate the meaning in which I now make use of the word.

\* See 'Edinburgh Review,' vol. xiv.

† Plato explained this, rather humorously, in his conversation with Diogenes. The two being one day at table, 'and being fallen in conversation upon immaterial and external exemplars, Diogenes says to Plato, *I see very well there is a Goblet and a Table, but I see neither Gobleity nor Tableity.* To which Plato answered, '*T* is because thou hast bodily eyes, which can see a Goblet and a Table, but not those of the mind, which alone see Gobleity and Tableity.'

hence, the sum of individuals generated in conformity thereto, may properly be called an 'image, proceeding according to number, of the *spirituality* [*αἰών*] abiding in one.' It may, also, be called an image partaking of the nature and character of that from which it proceeds, that is, a *spiritual*, or, as I have rendered it, an *existential* image.

2. *Essences*, or *actual entities*; which, being diffused through individuals, make them what they are; — secret, invisible, spiritual existences, which assume appropriate materials, and reduce those materials to forms harmonizing with themselves; and thus produce sensible beings, of one or another species, according to that peculiar essence which, in each case, possesses and reduces them to consistency.

In this case, also, that which comprehends the whole sum of essences is the *αἰών*, [EXISTENCE] 'abiding in one.' The sum of individuals formed according to it, compose the '*existential* image proceeding according to number.'

These essences, in the view contemplated, are entirely *spiritual* entities; and that which comprises them monadically may properly be called *spirituality*.

3. *Patterns*, or *spiritual forms* produced in the Divine Mind by positive acts of the Divine Wisdom and Will, as models on which he would create things sensible.

In this case, likewise, that which comprises the sum of of spiritual forms produced by the Divinity, is the *αἰών* [EXISTENCE], or, rather the *spirituality* 'abiding in one'; and beings created according to it, compose the 'proceeding image' partaking of the nature and character of the original *spirituality*.

4. *Actual, spiritual existences* in the Divine Being, coëxistent with himself; the flowing forth of which, produces objects sensible; each '*according to his kind*.' So, that all things are in God, and God is in all things. And the universe, thus produced, or *generated*, he calls the 'one only begotten'; and a 'God.'

In this case, too, that which embraces the sum of original spiritual being in the Divinity, is the *αἰών* [EXISTENCE, or, far more appropriately, the SPIRITUALITY] abiding in ONE; and the sum of beings in the universe, which, in our view, have *been*, now *are*, or *shall be*, compose the 'image proceeding according to number,' and participating of the nature and character of the entire spiritual *existence*, from which it flows.



To the present inquiry it matters little which definition we adopt for those things which the Athenian sage speaks of under the beforementioned names. In any one of the above cases, the passage explains itself, with as little difficulty as could be expected, in a passage on an abstruse subject, in an author whose writings are confessedly obscure to an extreme. And, in any of these cases, that which is signified by *αἰών*, is, altogether, *spirituality*.

For myself, I believe the fourth definition to be the correct one; because it harmonizes well with Plato's expressions elsewhere, and with the general train of his mind, so far as we can gather it from his words. He seems clearly to have contemplated the universe as being filled with spiritual presence and energy, by means of existences in God, flowing forth at his will, harmonizing with that will, and forming and upholding all things. I believe, that in the passage in question, he called the comprehension of these spiritual entities in God, by the name *αἰών* [EXISTENCE, or SPIRITUALITY], and intended to express reference, of some kind, to that *wholeness* of original spiritual being by the term *αἰώνιος* [EXISTENTIAL OF SPIRITUAL].\*

I am, of course, under no obligation to believe or defend the doctrine of Plato; but I am bound, in common honesty, to say what I think he meant, if I speak on the subject at all.

It may be made a question, — Why should Plato have employed *αἰών* [EXISTENCE] as the name of this comprehending completeness of spiritual being, in this particular place, when he had not employed it so elsewhere? — On this, it may be observed; —

He frequently changes the names of the spiritual subjects under consideration, when speaking of them either individually or collectively; and whether you believe them to be *abstract*

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\* Proclus, on this passage, if I apprehend him right through Taylor's translation, calls *αἰών*,† 'the monad of the intelligible unities. But I mean,' he adds, 'by unities, the ideas of intelligible animals, and the genera of all these intelligible ideas. *Αἰών* [existence] is the one comprehension therefore of the summit of the multitude of these, and the cause of the invariable permanency of all things; not subsisting in the multitude of intelligibles themselves, nor being a collection of them; but in an exempt manner; being present to them, by itself disposing and, as it were, forming them and making them to be wholes.'

† I presume it to be *αἰών*, which Taylor translates *eternity*. By *intelligible*, he means that which is not an object of *sense*, but only of the *mind*.

*deas, essences, patterns, or vital existences.* Sometimes he calls them by the name *ἰδέα*· sometimes *ὄν*, or *ἀεὶ ὄν*· and by other names likewise. At times, also, he makes use of one or another of these names in a collective sense, expressing the whole sum of spiritual being.

He evidently intended, by these different terms, to describe something *invariable*; something constantly *the same*; under whatever varieties of form it might appear and act. These names, therefore, whether used individually or collectively, represent *that which EXISTS*; that which is *true BEING*; and he considered nothing worthy the name of true BEING but that which is of a spiritual nature. It would have been wonderful, indeed, if, among the different titles, he had nowhere made use of a term so appropriate as *αἰών* [EXISTENCE, OR COMPLETENESS, OR SPIRITUALITY], in order to express the comprehension of them as one. The ordinary import of this term is scarcely, if at all, different from that of some of the other names for the same things, which he had previously used, either in an individual or collective sense.\*

Also the *Timæus* is an exceedingly *unique* production in respect to Plato. So much so, as to render it extremely doubtful, whether he was intending, in it, to express his own opinion, as to the mode in which the universe was made (or, as he calls it, *generated*), or, whether he was merely exhibiting, in a parabolic manner, a mode in which it might have been done. The latter is, certainly, the more probable. In this Dialogue, he puts the discourse into the mouth of *Timæus*, a name which he probably adopted from that of the Locrian philosopher, a Pythagorean; but when expressing what he himself thinks most likely to be true, he commonly puts the discourse into the mouth of Socrates. In the *Timæus*, too, the language is that of positive affirmation; whereas, the great peculiarity of Plato is, that he affirms nothing positively, as Cicero taught long ago. In such a production, we might expect that he would employ

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\* In order to show the manner in which terms of this kind were anciently employed, I here subjoin an extract from Alcinous, in a translation; by whom I know not;—‘*Idea with reference to God is the eternal* [probably, *αἰώνιος*, *existential*] *Intelligence; and with respect to us it is the first Intelligible; in reference to matter it is Measure; in reference to the universe it is the Exemplar; and in respect to itself it is Essence.*’

some terms not very common in his other works ; and that among the different appellations of the spiritual existences he was naming, he would sometimes describe them, either separately or collectively, by titles different from those most common elsewhere.

Further, it is the opinion of eminent scholars, that in this Dialogue, Plato was exhibiting a hypothetical cosmogony, formed according to certain principles, which he had derived from Timæus Locrus, the Pythagorean ; in common with whom he held the doctrine of essential spiritual existences ; each having, indeed, some little diversity of opinion respecting them.

There is, I believe, no work of Timæus extant, excepting his very brief treatise ‘on the Soul of the World.’ But it is on record that he composed other works, and was a teacher of eminence in his day. Plato would hardly, otherwise, have condescended to learn of him. The use of words, then, by Timæus Locrus in this only extant work, although in few instances, is of some consequence in elucidating the meaning of the same terms by Plato, when the latter is speaking in some kind of association with him.

Now in the short work of Timæus, *αἰὼν* occurs, in the sense of *existence*, having reference to the spiritual state before named, too obviously to be mistaken ; and *αἰώνιος* occurs in connexions in which a sense of spirituality *forces* itself on the mind. *Αἰὼν* must have been a term of frequent usage among the Pythagoreans ; if we may judge from its frequent occurrence in the few extant fragments of Empedocles, one of the great masters of the sect. It can hardly be otherwise, than that Timæus must have used it often in his other works, and in his conversations with his Athenian friend, in a sense similar to that in which it appears in his treatise ; and it is a term equally as expressive of the thing in view, as any which Plato had before employed ; more so, in the design of expressing the comprehension of spiritual being in one.

Plato, therefore, Pythagorizing, in this Dialogue, as he obviously was, and this in connexion with Timæus, although mingling the simpler doctrine of the Locrian with speculations of his own, could hardly fail to make use of a term so appropriate to the comprehensive unity of his essential and changeless spiritual subjects, as *αἰὼν* [EXISTENCE],

although he had, previously, been in the habit of expressing the same by other words.

We often do something like the same now, after having hit upon the name; when we call a fixed or established being an *existence*, although we may have previously called it by other forms of speech. And we never mean to declare, in this word itself, whether the existence expressed is either temporary or eternal. We mean to assert nothing more than its simple *being*.

It may not be amiss to consider the very great propriety of this term *αἰών* [EXISTENCE], for expressing, in collective unity, those spiritual subjects, which Plato contemplated, under the name *ἰδέα*, κ. τ. λ.

There is no doubt that he considered them as eternal in themselves. But when naming them, he very seldom makes use of any term relating to their *duration*. He calls them by titles expressing mere *being*, without reference to duration. Even his *αἰὲ ὄν* is far less frequent, than his simple *ὄν* or *ἰδέα*; and *αἰὲ*, in this connexion, can hardly be counted a term expressing *duration*; so much as it does *constancy* or *steadfastness*.

I believe he abstained from terms signifying duration, designedly,\* when naming these spiritual subjects. He contemplated them as simultaneous things subject to no order of succession; and the use of a term expressing duration would have raised in the mind an idea of succession, which he was anxious to avoid.

Speak of a thing as *enduring*, even *eternally*, the strongest term in our language in this intention, and the term itself gives birth to ideas of succession. The mind, at once, looks 'before and after.' We image a succession, which, to be sure, on one hand finds no beginning; but, still, we are running along the line of the *past*, in search of one; — a succession, also, which, on the other hand, finds no end; but, still, we are following along the line of the future, seeking one.

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\* I take the present opportunity to say, for the information of those who may be curious on the subject, that the term *αἰδιότης* does not occur in any of Plato's works. *Αἰδής* appears in ten instances only; of which, five are in the *Timæus*, and two in the doubtful, if not positively spurious, *Axiochus*. It occurs three times in *Timæus* Locrus. It does not occur in any of the examined *poets*, excepting once in Hesiod [*Scut. Herc.* V. 310]. It is very frequent in *Aristotle*.



Still more is it thus, when we make use of such terms as *everlasting*, *for ever*, &c., in order to express limitless duration. They invariably present the idea of *succession*; an idea wholly inadmissible in regard to that which is changelessly existent.

Metaphysical *being* admits of no association with succession of any kind. It neither *was*, nor *shall be*; and, as Plato affirms, it is the only form of speech strictly appropriate to it. In contemplating the Divine Being, and all things existing essentially in him, he seems to have banished all idea of succession from his mind. He saw God in all things, and all things in God, as simply existing in an unsuccessional *nowness*; nothing prior, nothing posterior; nothing first, nothing last; but all were present existences in his contemplation of them. He therefore used the language of the present, when speaking of things existing in the Divine Spirituality, or of the Divinity himself.

A similar use of language appears in the Scripture occasionally, in regard to similar subjects;—as when the Divine Being revealed his presence to Moses, and called himself by the simple name, 'THE EXISTENT,' ['I am he who AM. אֱהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיָּה. *Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν*.] In this expression, God attributes to himself *existence* alone; and counts it all-sufficient as his name, to one embued with all wisdom. Had he made any allusion to *duration* in this connexion it would have destroyed the simplicity of the name. The addition *everlasting*, *always*, or any similar term significant of *duration*, would have raised the idea of succession in the human mind of even the philosophic Moses, and would have hindered him from reaching the conception of simple BEING, not merely without beginning and without end, but, also, without prior or posterior, first or last; a present and changeless EXISTENCE.

For a similar reason, I believe, the Divine Being appropriated to himself, as his proper name, the significant title JEHOVAH [יְהוָה], which, also, I may be allowed to call THE EXISTENT; a name from which all idea of successional being is utterly excluded; a name so holy that the Hebrew in process of time became afraid to pronounce it; although it was the name of his own and his fathers' God.\*

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\* Aristotle tells us that αἰὼν was pronounced *devoutly*, or as some-

I believe Plato had similar thoughts concerning the Divinity, and those essential beings which he contemplated as coëxisting with him. And he could not have chosen a more appropriate term for describing that which comprises them as one, than *αἰών* [EXISTENCE], nor one more appropriate for describing relation to this wholeness, than *αἰώνιος* [EXISTENTIAL]. But this no more proves that these words mean *eternity* and *eternal* in respect to duration, of themselves, than it does that the English word *existence* means the same, because it is the most appropriate term in our language for expressing the unsuccessional BEING of the Deity. The Greek *αἰών* and the English *existence* both stand on one ground in this respect. Of themselves, they are equally applicable to temporary, as to eternal beings. The particular subject concerning which they are employed, must, in each case, decide, whether that which they represent is eternal or temporary as to its duration. The words, in themselves, decide nothing in that respect. In truth, they have no reference to *duration*.

These observations are submitted, as applying, with little variation, to the matter in hand; whether Plato, in the subjects under consideration, contemplated *abstract ideas*, *essences*, *patterns*, or the actual spiritual *existences* coëxistent in the Divine spirituality, which I believe he did.

In either case, the nature of the subjects is *spirit*; the realm of their dwelling is *spirit*; and that which comprehends them all in one, may, more appropriately than otherwise, be denominated *spirituality*.

I am the more glad to see this word employed in this sense by Plato, because I have long been persuaded of a meaning of a similar character in the Hebrew עֵלֹה; which persuasion derives support from this usage of *αἰών*. But, on this, no more can be said at present.

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thing divine [*Θεῖος*] by the *ancients*. A singular conjecture arises in the dim twilight of distant possibility; — whether *αἰών* may not have had some original kindred with יְהוָה? The final N in Greek was seldom pronounced in a proper name; the ancient Hebrews, we are told by good authority, called their God ΙΑΩ, which could not have sounded very different from *αἰώ*; each word gave birth to devout feelings in the speaker; and each signifies EXISTENCE in their respective tongues.

All this is hardly sufficient to found a conjecture on. Still it is well to consider even the possible consanguinities of ancient words.

IV. The use of the word χρόνος [*Chronos*, commonly translated *Time*, which I have also done in obedience to custom,] by Plato, in connexion with αἰών and αἰώνιος, may demand some attention.

It might seem, at first sight, that αἰών should signify *eternity*, and αἰώνιος, *eternal*, from their being employed in connexion with χρόνος, commonly called *Time*. But I think very differently. Plato does not set χρόνος in opposition with αἰών, as *Time* is commonly set with *Eternity*. These words in his usage sustain a relation to each other, very different from that which time sustains to eternity.

Suppose, for the moment, that Plato understood by χρόνος either *lapse of duration*, *measure of duration*, or *measured duration*, one or the other of which is what we commonly mean by *Time*; and that, by αἰών, he understood *Eternity*. Then, he calls *Time* 'an image of *Eternity*'; when, in either of these senses, it is its *opposite*, and not its image.

Again;—on this supposition, he calls *Time* 'an *eternal* image of *Eternity*.' Did he mean to say, that *Time* in either of these senses is *Eternal*? He could not have been so inconsistent. Nay, in almost the same breath, he speaks of *Time* [χρόνος], as something which may cease to be; 'Time [χρόνος] then was generated together with the heaven; that having been generated together, together also they might be dissolved, if ever there should be any dissolution of them.'

To believe, then, that by χρόνος he understood what we call *Time*, in either of the views named, would be charging him with an inconsistency too glaring to be admitted. He clearly intended something different from this by χρόνος. It is desirable to ascertain what he did understand by it.

We are apt to conceive of *Time* as either *lapse of duration*, *measure of duration*, or *measured duration*. But, in strict truth, there is no such thing as *lapse of duration*. Of course, there is no such thing as measured duration or measure of duration. For, without lapse, there is nothing to measure or be measured.

It is only in our imperfect apprehension that such a thing seems to be. 'With the Lord [the EXISTENT] one day is as a thousand years; and a thousand years as one day.' Considered as lapse of duration, neither of them is any thing; and one nothing is as long as another.

It is not possible to establish, and maintain permanently in the mind, any commencement of creation, considered as a fixed point in duration, at which the Divinity *began* to create; or so to establish and maintain any such point in duration at which he will *cease* to create. No sooner do you think to have set up such a point, on either hand, and begin to rest upon it, than a boundless eternity sweeps round the whole, and engulphs all *first* and all *last*, all *prior* and all *posterior*, in its fathomless abyss. It renders all being which, in our apprehension, *has been, is, or shall be*, a present and changeless *existence* in God. Things *seem* to be first and last, prior and posterior, to us, only because we cannot sound the depths, and measure the extent, of infinite and eternal existence.

Still, existing *in* the creation somewhere, as we individually do, we extend the mind on one hand, as we say, *backward*, through what we can comprehend in our knowledge; and, on the other hand, as we say, *forward*, through what we can anticipate. Within these portions of existence, we behold beings rising and disappearing to our view, each by itself. We, therefrom, image an order of succession suited to our present powers, and present modes of apprehending things. We contemplate this apparent order of succession as occupying duration, and call this apparently occupied duration *Time*. We use language in respect to the existences thus apparently in succession; and, in common sense, speak of first and last, older and younger. This we do, notwithstanding, in our deeper thoughts, we know that all things are present existences in him who knows no first nor last.

In strict truth, then, *Time* is no more than that amount of existence, which falls within our apprehension; and which seems to us to proceed in an order of succession. But, in ordinary language, we speak of such *apparently* successional being, as a reality.

Plato was as well aware of all this as any of us can be. He, therefore, affirms it to be improper to speak of things, in regard to essential being, strictly as prior or posterior. Nevertheless, on account of our finite modes of apprehension, he admits the propriety of speaking thus, 'concerning a generation proceeding in Time [*ἐν χρόνῳ*]; for the parts of time are motions.' He accordingly speaks of them so. But he takes pains to let us know, that this mode of speech is



not strictly correct [ $\omega\acute{\nu}$  οὐδὲν ἀκριβῶς λέγωμεν]. It is allowable, only, on account of the imperfect apprehension of man, 'borne in sense.'

What, then, did Plato mean by χρόνος [Time], in this connexion? — I can make it nothing else than what he calls *generated being in motion*, or *succession*, as appearing to us. I do not mean *generated being* simply. The *motion*, or apparent *succession* is as requisite as the *being*, in order to constitute it χρόνος [Time].

Thus, for instance, the heaven may have been generated. But unless it be in motion, so that its contained objects appear and disappear in apparent successional order, it does not constitute χρόνος [Time]. Let it move, and the motion and existence together are χρόνος Time. Such motion being contained within a sphere, or a circle, returning into itself; like what Timæus Locrus calls ἐγκύκλιον μεταβολάν [an encircled change.]

With reference to this meaning of the word in Plato's age, Aristotle tells us, that 'some call the motion of the universe χρόνος [Time]; some, the sphere itself.' Plato puts both together; and χρόνος, in his use, is, in the abstract, the comprehension of all generated being (what is to us *past*, *present*, or *to come*,) considered as in apparent succession, or, as he calls it, motion. And as all generated being always *appears* to be in succession to us; therefore, we may speak of it, in its parts, in common apprehension, as what *was*, *is*, or *shall be*; assuming in speech as a reality, that which always *seems* to be so.

Thus, χρόνος [Time] is, in substance, what we call *successional being* considered as a whole; comprising, after a monadic manner, all generated things, from what we term the beginning to what we call the end of the universe.\*

This may, according to Plato's notions, be very properly styled 'a movable image of' that sum of existence which abides unsuccessionally in God; — a very different thing from its being an image of limitless *duration*. Successional being may, consistently, be called an image of another being not in succession, (that is, a fixed and changeless existence,) if made according to it, as its paradigm. But it would be inconsistent to call such successional being an image of

\* There is a modern use of the word *Time*, not very dissimilar from this. As when we sometimes speak of *Time* and mean by it the *world* with its objects and affairs.

the limitless *duration* of that constant existence ; inasmuch as the very circumstance of its proceeding successionally, and being only '*both being and being to be*,' makes it, as to duration, the opposite, and not the resemblance, of a duration that is limitless.

With his views, therefore, Plato could, and does call *χρόνος* [successional being] '*an EXISTENTIAL [3] image [an image conformed to the original spiritual existence in the Divinity] proceeding according to number [successionally] of the [original, spiritual] EXISTENCE [4] abiding in one.*' And so, '*these things [which appear to us who are borne in sense] are generated forms of χρόνος [successional being, called also Time] which imitates [spiritual] EXISTENCE [5], and is being circularly revolved according to number.*'

Inasmuch, also, as generated being moves simultaneously with its generation ; and the being and motion together constitute *χρόνος* [successional being] ; therefore, he could say, as in the subsequent part of the paragraph, '*χρόνος [successional being, or, if you prefer the word, Time] was made together with the heaven*' . . . . '*and according to the paradigm of the EXISTENTIAL [6] nature*' [according to the pattern of the spiritual EXISTENCE in God] . . . . '*But, truly, that paradigm,*' [he adds,] '*is a being with respect to entire EXISTENCE [7] [it exists in association, as one, with all spiritual being ; or, in association with the whole spirituality of the Deity] ; but this, being generated continually with reference to entire χρόνος [the whole sum of successional being], is both being and being to be alone.*' — And so, as he thinks and affirms, all successional being, as a whole, has '*an imitation of the pervadingly EXISTENTIAL [8] nature.*'

I have here presented as clear a view as I can, of my understanding of this passage in Plato ; and in the whole, of his entire usage of *αἰών* and *αἰώνιος*. I am aware, that some of my expressions are not so free from obscurity as might be wished. But my author is, himself, confessedly obscure ; his subject under consideration is abstruse ; and some obscurity in commenting in such a case is not always avoidable. I will fain hope, however, to have given you a general view of my understanding of his use of these words in this portion of his works. I have no suspicion that he employed them with reference to *duration* of any kind ; but to that *sum*, or *completeness*, which he contemplated, as what comprises all

*existence* in one ; which I have sometimes called *spirituality* ; and according to which all sensible being is produced.

After the foregoing comment on these words in Plato, little need be said on the instances in *Timæus* Locrus. They are as follows : —

P. 95. D. Speaking of the universe as made in a spherical form, he teaches, that it is necessary for all things to be inclosed in a sphere ; so that all parts should be harmonious ; and, though changing with respect to each other, should be the same with respect to the whole ; — ‘*so that they put forth an encircled change* [*δι’ αἰῶνος*] *through* EXISTENCE.’

This expression may signify, either, during the appropriate *term of being*, or, more probably, *by reason*, or *means of Completeness*, or *Life*, or *Spirituality* ; διὰ with the genitive expressing the instrumental cause or reason.

I here also observe, that in several passages in the preceding inquiry among different Greek writers, this form [*δι’ αἰῶνος*] is susceptible of a translation and meaning similar to the last named.

P. 97. D. Εἰκὼν δὲ ἐστὶ τῷ ἀγεννάτῳ χρόνῳ, ὃν αἰῶνα ποταγορέυομες· ὡς γὰρ ποτ’ αἰδίων παράδειγμα τὸν ἰδανικὸν κόσμον ὁδε ὠρανὸς ἐγεννάθη, οὕτως ὡς πρὸς παράδειγμα τὸν αἰῶνα ὁδε χρόνος σὺν κόσμῳ ἐδαμνοργήθη.

It [*χρόνος*, *Time*] is an image of that *ungenerated Time* [*χρόνῳ*] which we call EXISTENCE ; for as, according to an eternal paradigm, the *idanic*\* world, this heaven was generated ; so, according to the paradigm EXISTENCE, this *Time*, or successional being [*χρόνος*], was generated together with the world.

To render *χρόνος*, *Time*, in the common acceptation of the word, and αἰὼν, *eternity*, in this place, would make strange meaning. It would be calling *change* the image of *unchangeableness* ; *succession* the image of *constancy* ; *flux* the image of *not flowing* ; *division* the image of *indivisibility*.

It is plain that the *ungenerated Time* of *Timæus* is not *Eternity*. It is some spiritual existence, according to which, as a paradigm, that which he calls *χρόνος* [*Time*] is formed.

I conceive that by *χρόνος* [*Time*] he means the same as Plato does ; namely, generated being considered as in motion or in apparent succession ; the motion or apparent

\* I transfer *ιδανικὸν*, rather than translate it. Cornarius renders, — ‘*Mundum in specie extantem.*’

succession being necessary in order to make the generated being *χρόνος* [Time].

But, in his view, all things exist spiritually, and essentially, in God; whether they are within the perception of creatures or not. That whole sum of being, therefore, which we call *past*, *present*, and *future*, and which in our view is successional [*ὁ πᾶς χρόνος*], exists as *one* in the Divinity; and this *whole* is, there, an *existence* [*αἰών*].

Indeed, Plato and Timæus appear, at times, to have thought, that the infinity of spiritual existence in the Divinity, would be, being exhibited to the perception of creatures (that is, generated) continually [*διὰ τέλους*] in *χρόνος* [Time], or apparent successional being. So that *χρόνος* [Time], considered as a whole, is a complete image of the Divine Spirituality.

As, therefore, *αἰών* [EXISTENCE] is 'infinite LIFE, at once perfect and full, the whole of which is ever present to itself;' so '*χρόνος* [Time] is a flowing image of such LIFE;' and this without reference to positive *duration*.

The meaning of the entire passage in Timæus Locrus, then, may be correctly expressed, in paraphrase, thus:— 'Generated successional being, as a whole, is an image of that ungenerated comprehension of being which appears to us successional, but which, in essence, we call EXISTENCE, or *spirituality*; for as, according to an eternal exemplar, the idanic world, this heaven was generated; so according to the exemplar EXISTENCE in God, this apparent successional being was fabricated together with the world.' — This is saying the same as Plato says after him; that *χρόνος* [apparent successional being] is a movable image of constant EXISTENCE in Divinity.

P. 96. C. *Mind alone can discern God, the EXISTENTIAL, the ruler and generator of all these things* [*Θεὸν δὲ τὸν μὲν αἰώνιον νόος ὁρᾷ μόνος τῶν πάντων ἀρχαγὸν καὶ γενέτορα τούτων*]. *But this [God, the universe,] which is generated we perceive by sight, &c.*

It would be difficult to assign any other meaning than *spiritual* to this *αἰώνιος*. The antithesis in the text imperatively requires it. Even should we say *eternal*, we should mean *spiritual*.

P. 105. A. *The world, being full of Gods and men, and other living beings, which were fabricated according to the most*



*excellent image of the ungenerated and EXISTENTIAL idea*  
[εἶδος ἀγεννάτω καὶ αἰωνίῳ.]

The subject of this αἰώνιος is *spirit* itself. Whether Timæus intended to express its spiritual nature by this word, is willingly submitted to the reader. I readily believe he did. But I have no right to believe that he intended to express its perpetuity of *duration* by this adjective; until it shall appear, that αἰών, the parent noun, signified *perpetual duration* in that age; against which meaning the evidence produced is almost unanimous, and in no case positively in its favor. While, on the contrary, the evidence of a *spiritual* import in both that word, and the few discovered instances of αἰώνιος, is equally decisive.

In regard to αἰών, it carries about it an atmosphere of spirituality, in almost every instance in which it occurs in ancient Greek, within our present view; as the reader must have perceived without comment of mine. In many of the instances, its plain meaning is either *Spirit* or *Life*; or *spirituality* considered as *state of vital or intellectual energy*, — the secret, invisible state of existence and action in which the perceiver and the thing perceived are scarcely, if at all, different from being *one* and the same.

In regard to αἰώνιος, in every discovered instance, the context invariably leads you to something *spiritual*. It carries you, either among souls in Hades; or into the immaterial realm of *abstract ideas, essences, intellectual paradigms*, or actual *spiritual existences* in the Divine Being. A sense of *spirituality* is forced upon the mind, wherever, as yet, we read this word; and, in some of the instances, no other sense than *spiritual* can be consistently attached to it.

Remember, now, that these are the earliest instances of αἰώνιος in classic Greek, so far as yet appears; that they occur in writers who are treating expressly of *spiritual* subjects, even subjects similar to those on which Moses, the inspired, writes, although they are void of his simplicity and truth; that these instances occur in Greek writers, who, probably, were not wholly unacquainted with Scriptural forms of expression, in a Greek translation of the Books of Moses, where this adjective appears so often with reference to God, a SPIRIT, and things relating to Him.

Compare this with the *spiritual* import so extensively prevalent in αἰών, throughout the more ancient writers; and

with its special sense of *spirituality* as used by Timæus and Plato, when they are introducing the adjective into their language ; — and, the inference is almost irresistible, that the ancient, earliest, and first known meaning of *αἰώνιος*, in classic Greek, is *spiritual*. I must, therefore, hold to this meaning, which is thus supported ; to the rejection of that relating to *duration*, for which I cannot yet find any support.

When, also, I search the Scriptures, pursuing after Divine truth through the medium of language, I must needs take with me this spiritual import of these words, to bear what evidence it may, in elucidating the sense of those Hebrew terms to which, in *ancient* days, they were thought fully to correspond.

Professor Stuart must forgive me for doing this, notwithstanding his having affirmed, that '*αἰώνιος*, in the sense of *spiritual*, is an *utter stranger* to classic Greek.'

There are no more instances of either word in the works of Timæus the Locrian.

I have pursued the inquiry in this particular way, chiefly, for my own satisfaction. I publish the result, because it may be acceptable to any inquirer, so disposed, to have a concentrated view of the *entire* usage of these words, in such ancient Greek writers as come within the examination. It is well to have witnesses to tell not only the truth, but the *whole* truth which they know, relating to the case in hand ; and to have them so that they may be cross-examined.

If I have not been so fortunate as to elicit the true meaning of the words in question from these witnesses, still, there they are, the witnesses themselves. Let whoever will, question them as he will. But, until it is otherwise made manifest, I must continue to believe, that *αἰών* and *αἰώνιος* sustained a *spiritual* sense in ancient Greek ; and expect to find them so employed in the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

In conclusion ; — having ascertained that my former signature and date did not sufficiently indicate the responsible individual, and that some mistakes have happened in consequence ; and having no desire to shrink from any proper responsibility ; I hereunto subscribe in fulness,

Yours in good will,

EZRA S. GOODWIN.

*Sandwich, March 1, 1832.*

ART. III. — *Natural Theology; or Essays on the Existence of Deity and of Providence, on the Immateriality of the Soul, and a Future State.* By the Rev. ALEXANDER CROMBIE, LL.D., F.R.S., and M.R.S.L. London. 1829. 2 vols. 8vo.

THE subjects, which are ably discussed in these volumes, have at different periods in the history of our race, afforded the most striking exhibitions both of the weakness and the power of man, as a moral and intellectual being. One of the last and highest efforts of the human mind is to acquire and retain such views on these topics, as are in a good degree worthy of their elevated nature. Between the extremes of man's progress may be found every variety of groveling superstition, of fantastic or unripe speculation, and of noble, sublime, and spiritual trains of thought or argument. There is nothing irrational, useless, or painful, and almost nothing wicked, which has not, in one shape or another, at one time or another, appeared in religious belief or sacred rites; and, on the other hand, there is scarcely a form of exalted thought or feeling, scarcely a pure and lofty aspiration of the soul, or a strenuous exercise of intellectual strength, which has not been called forth and matured in the advancing course of the religious sentiment among mankind. We cannot cast an eye over the annals of the world without coming to the melancholy conclusion, that some of the greatest of man's errors have been on the holiest of subjects; but the same survey relieves us with the consoling testimony, that these subjects have likewise excited some of the highest mental efforts, cherished some of the most noble hopes, and led to some of the most beautiful and glorious results, of which our moral constitution is capable.

To these varieties, we suppose, may be ascribed in a great measure the different estimation, in which what is called natural religion has been held. The conclusions, to which it has led or may lead the human mind respecting God, immortality, and moral truth, have by some been set at nought as quite without value, if not worse than useless, and by others extolled as bearing the authority of absolute demonstration, and possessing the beauty of pure

spirituality. No small part of this discrepancy of opinion arises probably from the difference in the aspects, which natural religion presents at the successive stages of its progress, from the first rude attempts of the mind to connect its thoughts with the invisible world to the elaborate, philosophical, and profound systems of the great masters of human reason. We need only turn to the accounts of savage or semi-barbarous tribes, to learn how poor and abject are the forms in which the religious sentiment there develops itself. Their religion is bound fast to their servile fears; and by these chiefly, if not only, it maintains an ascendancy over their feelings. In that rude state, attention is scarcely at all arrested by that tranquil and beautiful course of nature, which to enlightened reason proclaims with a testimony so irresistibly powerful the agency of One, who hath formed all things well. Terrific and awful events are those, with which alone the thought of a mysterious Power, higher than their own, is associated. They take no note of the calm and glorious sunshine, of the regular and delightful vicissitude of the seasons scattering blessings around the circle of the year, or, in general, of the steady and noiseless operation of cause and effect in the stupendous machinery of nature. In that low stage of rational culture, man turns his attention to something more stirring and fearful,—to the thunder that rolls over his head as if to sound the march of some tremendous power,—to the lightning leaping from the sky as a messenger of vengeance and destruction,—to the storm that sweeps into tumult the mighty waters, or tears from its ancient bed the deep-rooted forest. In these dismaying events only, the untutored savage sees the operation of a Deity. His religion is called out only by objects of terror, and its character, of course, partakes largely of this spirit. It fastens itself upon all the coarse and fierce passions, and is roused into action by none but agitating excitements. The worship which it dictates is of a corresponding character; its sacrifices are bloody, its ceremonies senseless, its rites barbarous. When we turn from such a view to contemplate the forms, in which natural religion appears in the writings and speculations of enlightened minds, of those who have brought the powers of a clear and comprehensive intellect to bear on the great



topics connected with the moral nature and expectations of man, we find the strange follies, the idle or melancholy superstitions which hung, like a cloud, over the first ages in the religious history of our race, cleared away. The progress of expanded inquiry, and the continually increasing maturity of thought, are manifested in the various exhibitions of profound reflection, of philosophical investigation, of methodical systems, of far-reaching theories, more or less sound or visionary, more or less rational or unsatisfactory, but indicating the vigorous and strenuous exercise of the mind, the calm and deep researches of the reasoning faculty on subjects which are felt to be intensely interesting, without borrowing any portion of their interest from slavish fear or heated passion. Spiritual truths gleam forth from high and pure sources ; their beauty and power, their deep meaning and large extent, are apprehended in such degrees as the limited faculties of our nature permit ; and the human understanding finds and delights to trace the chain of connexion between itself and the Supreme Mind, between the universe and its God. There is not, perhaps, a wider interval between the notions of the Eastern shepherds, who first watched the stars in the simplicity of wondering ignorance, and the astronomical science of Newton or Laplace, than between the rude and gross conceptions entertained in the infancy of the religious sentiment, and the researches, speculations, and views of such men as Plato and Cicero, Leibnitz and Clarke, Locke and Kant, Reimarus and Paley.

In the range of such a progress as this, it is evident that natural religion may be set forth in very different aspects, according to the point of view selected for the representation. It is sufficiently easy to make a specious plea against it, by dealing only in a certain kind of statements, by taking the miserable superstition, the childish reasoning, and the various abuses which have accompanied its development in some forms and at some periods, and presenting these as its only and its best fruits. We forget, perhaps, that Christianity is liable to suffer equal injustice in the same way, and may as easily be treated in the same partial and one-sided manner. The disposition to deal thus unfairly has not been wanting. We cannot understand why any true friend of revelation should wish to depreciate the

value of natural religion. Yet there are not a few writers, with whom this has been a primary and favorite object. They appear to have deemed it a pious and Christian duty to throw contempt upon the conclusions attained by pure reason in its investigations concerning Him, who bestowed it on man, as a distinguishing and glorious gift. There seems to have been in many minds a strange dread, lest the light of the outward works of God should mingle and blend itself with the light of the written word, — lest the testimony of our moral constitution should be placed by the side of the testimony of inspired truth. It is curious to observe how extremes meet here, as well as on some other subjects. Unwise defenders of revelation, and bold unbelievers have both shown the same disposition to throw scorn upon the light of nature, and to hold it utterly unworthy of the least reliance ; the object of the former being to give to the instructions of the sacred volume a false exaltation, by building their glory on the subjugation, if not on the ruins, of reason, — that of the latter to introduce an universal skepticism with regard to the grounds of all truth, by casting suspicion and contempt on the instrument with which the mind operates in its inquiries. We respect highly the talent and argumentative power, which Dr. Chalmers has displayed in many parts of his book on the ‘Evidence and Authority of Christianity’ ; but when he advances the strange proposition, that ‘of the invisible God we have no experience whatever,’ he seems to us to state a principle very nearly allied, to say the least, to some of those by which Hume has endeavoured to undermine or weaken the foundation of the primary doctrines of natural religion.

From the same erroneous way of viewing the subject, some of the advocates of revelation have injudiciously deemed, that they might best serve their cause by disparaging, as much as possible, the wisdom of the ancient inquirers after truth, and by pouring contempt on those efforts of the mind to penetrate into the future and the unseen, which were steps of great importance in the progressive education of the human race. Not so thought some of the fathers of the Christian church ; for they spoke of the sages of the old world as men, who were guided by a divine impulse. And there is a sense in which this is true. In every age, those who have retired within themselves, that they might

trace and understand, however imperfectly, the bearings of their immortal nature, and have listened to that internal voice which spoke of a Divine Agency above and around, — who have looked abroad on the universe, and have read therein the handwriting of Power and Benevolence, — who have fixed their high meditations on the spiritual principle which allies man to his God, — those, who have thus felt the tokens of the Divinity in the outward world, and in the stirring of their own thoughts, may well be said to have received the gift of illumination. We are often told that the speculations of the ancient philosophers on subjects connected with the spiritual world and the spiritual nature of man were poor and miserably defective, — that their arguments were weak, and their conclusions unsatisfactory even to themselves. Doubtless they aspired after more than they could reach, and felt deeply their need of a clearer and better light. How can it be otherwise with unassisted reason? The master-spirit of Grecian philosophy is described, in a well known passage in the writings of his scholar,\* as longing for the full and satisfactory instructions of a divine messenger. These men felt, as well they might, that they were surrounded by shadows and obscurity, and that the craving of the heart for views, on which it may rest with the quiet repose of assured confidence, was far from being wholly met and satisfied. But what is there in all this, that should authorize us to speak with pity or contempt of the inquiries and opinions of the greatest minds on the highest and most mysterious subjects? The history of philosophy down to the present day, even since the appearance of Christianity, bears sufficient testimony that the pursuit of abstract and speculative truth on such topics as God, eternity, and the human soul, deeply interesting as it is to many minds, is yet far enough from being the path to certainty. Yet who will say, that the discussion in modern times of questions, that stir so powerfully the strongest faculties and the best sympathies of our nature, has brought no valuable contribution to the cause of religious knowledge and religious truth? Why, then, should it be deemed necessary to cast contemptuous reproach on the wise men of old, and through them on the human understanding, as

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\* Plato in Alcibiade II.

if, because our faculties cannot grasp the mighty truths of the infinite and the spiritual in all their relations, it remains only that reason be silenced and put to shame by being taunted with its weakness and poverty? We understand but poorly the reverence due to our intellectual and moral constitution, — that image of God within us, — when we do thus. Though we may not admit the truth of what has somewhere been said, that ‘Socrates was a Christian born some centuries before his time,’ yet it is but an unfortunate way of rendering homage to revealed truth to maintain that men like him were children of condemnation, and have done nothing to enlighten their race, or to prepare the human mind for the bright and beautiful day of a heavenly dispensation. We have no sympathy with the spirit, in which Luther called Zuingli a Pagan, because he believed that the virtuous and gifted men of the heathen world had some knowledge of truth, and were capable of salvation.

Let it not be said that we would exalt natural religion at the expense of Christianity. It is not so; we would only ask for the former its place as a handmaid to the latter, and inasmuch as it is one of the forms in which God has been pleased to convey truth to our minds, we would claim for it its due value and real use. It is idle to say, that this cannot be done without disparaging the Gospel of Christ. We reverence the Gospel too much to believe this. Christianity is the mighty instrument appointed by God for the moral renovation, the spiritual advancement, of the world. It is the best gift of Heaven’s love to sinful and erring man, a gift conveyed through One in whom the spirit dwelt without measure. When we consider its instructions, bright with the light of that divine source whence they came, its sanctions solemn and far-reaching as eternity, its hopes full of immortality, its exhaustless treasures of consolation and grace, its adaptation not only to satisfy the wants of our spiritual nature, but to awaken a deep conviction of those wants, — we feel that every fountain of gratitude must have been dried up in our hearts, if we do not pour forth our offering of thanks for this communication between the Infinite Mind and our minds. We rejoice to believe, likewise, that the influence of Christianity has extended itself over every province of sentiment and thought, that literature has felt its purifying and ennobling touch, that imagination has been



chastened and exalted by its powerful action, and that if the philosophy of religion has taken in modern times a more truly spiritual and consistent character, and has arrived at more definite and satisfactory results, it is because it has been baptized into the spirit of Christianity, — because the power of heavenly wisdom has breathed into it a better life. But in all this we are unable to see the slightest reason why we should think lightly of the value of natural religion, or cast away its assistance. We believe, on the contrary, that Christianity presupposes the religion of nature, and rejoices to accept its aid and to coöperate with it on principles of harmonious concurrence. It is related of the celebrated Dr. Bentley, that he was apprehensive of having done harm to the cause of revelation by his famous sermons preached at Boyle's lecture in 1692, in which he demonstrated the being and providence of God from the discoveries of the Newtonian philosophy. There was a club of skeptics, he said, who acknowledged his reasoning to be unanswerable, but at the same time availed themselves of this concession to renew their attacks upon the religion of the Bible with the more vehemence, as being the weaker and more indefensible cause. We cannot understand how a man of Bentley's acute and powerful mind could have persuaded himself, that a protection might be found for the cause of Christian truth by giving up the province of reason as a sacrifice to the doubts, the cavils, and the sneers of skepticism; for such seems to have been the principle implied in the strange apprehension he entertained, on account of having defended the fundamental doctrines of the religion of nature so successfully, as to silence all objections.

It would be impossible for us, within sufficiently moderate limits, to go into an accurate examination of the comparative value of the different modes, in which the arguments for the existence and attributes of God proceed. They have commonly been divided into two general classes, — the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* ways of reasoning. The former of these scholastic terms is not, however, applied with strict propriety, at least, according to the usual definition of it. It has been customary with logicians to appropriate the term *a priori* to the method of reasoning from the nature of the cause to the nature of the effect. This method is manifestly inadmissible in an inquiry, the object of which is to prove the exist-

ence of the First Cause of all. The term, therefore, must be taken in a more comprehensive sense, as signifying the same thing with what is called the *synthetic* mode of arguing, in which certain axioms or incontrovertible principles are laid down, and from these other truths more complex are deduced. The proof *a posteriori*, on the other hand, proceeds in the *analytic* method, beginning with the phenomena and advancing from them up to God, their Author or Origin.

Of these modes the latter seems to have been generally considered, of late, as not only the most useful, but best adapted to the purpose of philosophical conviction. The whole class of metaphysical arguments on this subject have fallen not a little into disrepute. It has been said, that they either assume some point which ought to be proved, or reason in a circle, or may be evaded or retorted. The censure cast upon them by the late Dr. Brown is, we think, somewhat extravagant, when he says, that 'instead of throwing additional light on the argument for a Creator of the universe, they have served only to throw on it a sort of darkness, by leading us to conceive that there must be some obscurity in truths, which would give occasion to reasoning so obscure.' This inference would scarcely be justifiable as a general principle; for obscure reasoning is not necessarily unsound, since it may be obscure only because it is founded on abstract considerations remote from common apprehensions, and the obscurity may consequently be relative, not absolute. That such modes of reasoning, however, are not, for the most part, so satisfactory even to philosophical minds, as the arguments *a posteriori*, is quite evident. An interesting anecdote to this effect is related of Dr. Clarke by one of his contemporaries. 'When Dr. Clarke,' says Whiston, 'brought me his book ("Discourses concerning the Being and Attributes of God"), I was in my garden against St. Peter's College in Cambridge, where I then lived. Now I perceived that in these sermons he had dealt a great deal in abstract and metaphysic reasonings. I therefore asked him how he ventured into such subtilties, which I never durst meddle with? And showing him a nettle or the like contemptible weed, in my garden, I told him "that weed contained better arguments for the being and attributes of God, than all his metaphysics." Mr. Clarke confessed it to be so, but alleged for himself, "that

since such philosophers as Hobbes and Spinoza had made use of these kind of subtilties *against*, he thought proper to show that the like way of reasoning might be made use of *on the side* of religion." Which reason or excuse I allowed not to be inconsiderable. As to myself, I confess I have long esteemed such kind of arguments as the *most subtile*, but the *least satisfactory*, of all others whatsoever.\*

The argument for the being and attributes of God from the indications of *design* in the universe has the advantage of being at once popular, and strictly philosophical. Its foundation is laid in principles implanted in the very constitution of our nature; for it is impossible to see unquestionable marks of contrivance, and especially of systems of contrivances, without inferring the existence and agency of a designing mind. The inference may be exposed to certain cavils of verbal sophistry; but, it should be remembered, that these cavils must be addressed to the reasoning power in man, and that it is impossible to place more confidence in the results of that power, than we find ourselves irresistibly led to place in the process of mind, by which we pass at once from an effect, or series of effects, evincing wise purposes and well adjusted relations, to the belief in an Agent, by whom these phenomena were constituted and arranged. This remark may be applied to the objections made or insinuated against such a mode of reasoning by Hume, in the 'Dialogues on Natural Religion,' which can never perplex one whose mind is not already prepared by other influences to lean to the skeptical side of the question.

The almost innumerable facts in the constitution of the universe, on which the proof from design rests, have been so often and so beautifully stated and elucidated, that it would be superfluous, even if we had room, to go into the subject at length. What, in truth, is the study of the natural world and of man, but the study of skilful adaptations, and of wise and benevolent plans? What but the investigation of ends, and of means to accomplish these ends? Let us divest ourselves, as much as possible, of that habit of apathy and inattention, which long familiarity with the system of things around us has so strong a tendency to produce, and then mark the facts which our observation,

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\* Historical Memoir of the Life of Dr. S. Clarke, p. 6.

or that of others, reports to us. We find ourselves living in the midst of a universe, where nothing stands insulated or unconnected. From the planets, in their ceaseless and stupendous revolutions, to the smallest plant which hides its humble growth from all but the curious observer, the whole is a system of relations and adaptations. Between the light shed by the sun upon 'the family of worlds' around him, and the human eye, there is the most exact congruity and the most delicate fitness. The appurtenances, with which the various orders of animals are furnished, have the most curious and nicely adjusted respect to the element in which they subsist, to their mode of life, their defence, and their means of sustenance. The human frame is such a piece of wonderful mechanism, with such relations of parts to each other and to the condition in which we are placed, as to have employed in every age the study and the admiration of the being himself, who is thus fearfully and wonderfully made. If we should deem it madness to suppose that an exquisite statue, with all its delicate and beautiful proportions, could have become what it is without the designing mind of some Canova or Chantry, shall we dignify with the name of argument that absurdity, which would teach us that the living, moving, thinking *man* is the workmanship of no wisdom, the result of no intelligence? What has the hand of man constructed, which is comparable to the hand itself, that admirable instrument, which works with such facility and so variously, which 'brandishes a sword or manages a pen, strikes on the anvil with a hammer, or uses a delicate file, rows in the water or touches a lute.' In short, let any one take such a survey of the facts and laws of the universe, as is exhibited in many judicious and well-arranged works on natural theology, and then say whether he can refuse the conclusion, that he stands here as the spectator of a vast and astonishing system of machinery, in which the close and curious connexions, and the mutual subserviency of the parts bear a testimony, not to be mistaken, to a Designing Cause. In adopting this conclusion, he reasons on precisely the same irresistible principles of inference, as did the philosopher Aristippus when he was wrecked on a desolate island, where he knew not whether there were any inhabitants, and having seen, as he was walking on the shore, some regular mathematical figures



traced on the sand, immediately exclaimed to his companions, 'Take courage, my friends, for I perceive the marks of civilized men,'—or as the poor Arab, who, on being asked how he knew there is a God, replied, 'In the same way as I know by the print of a footstep on the ground whether it were a man or beast that passed that way.' Let any one examine the construction of a well-built ship, prepared to traverse the ocean 'like a thing of life'; let him observe how skilfully her shape is adapted to the element, on which she floats and through which she is to make her progress, how the sails are suited to catch the breeze and may be shifted according to circumstances, how all the various ropes, notwithstanding their apparent confusion, are adjusted to perform certain offices, and to be used for definite purposes, let him remark the controlling and directing power of the helm, the accommodations for the reception of the cargo, and for the convenience of passengers, the provisions against accidents and perils,—let him take such a survey, and then let it be proposed to him to account for the existence of this noble object without supposing it to be the effect of contrivance, the workmanship of an intelligent agent, the production of a mind, adapting the whole and the several parts of the structure to a certain purpose. He would deem the proposal an insult to his understanding. Yet how feeble and inadequate is this illustration of the argument from design for the existence of the Supreme Mind! The truth is, that the universe in general is a system of references to a power beyond itself; through all its departments and degrees it points onward and upward to an Intelligence, and conveys suggestions to our minds in a strict and definite manner, like the words uttered in common speech, as Berkeley has shown in his admirable remarks on what he calls 'the language of vision.'\* The first poet of our age,—one whose exquisite moral taste has opened new worlds to imagination in the still depths of nature's significance,—has an exceedingly beautiful turn of thought, which may be applied to this subject; having described a child listening to the murmuring sounds from 'the convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell,' he exclaims,

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\* Minute Philosopher, Dial. IV.

‘Even such a Shell the Universe itself  
Is to the ear of Faith ; and there are times,  
I doubt not, when to you it doth impart  
Authentic tidings of invisible things.’

The attempts which have been made to account for the origin of things, and for the peculiar character of the phenomena of creation, without admitting the existence of an intelligent First Cause, have been such as to show very convincingly how much more credulous a man the atheist is, than he who believes in God. They have furnished subjects for much disputation, and much ingenious argument ; but we think they will hardly be deemed worthy of very serious refutation by any reflecting or philosophical mind. When, for instance, we are told, in the spirit of some old hypotheses, that the order of nature with all its symmetry, its aptitudes, and its systematic arrangement, is the work of chance, the result of a fortuitous concourse of atoms (as the phrase is), we feel at once a disposition to ask, whether the solution be proposed seriously or in jest. Such a theory may be sufficiently met by an illustration, which has sometimes been used in the discussion of this topic. Let us suppose a triangular prism with three unequal sides, and a sheath exactly fitted to it, to be set in motion in the regions of space ; suppose them to have the power of varying their motions and of flying up and down in all directions. The probability that they will never meet is as infinity to one ; and if they should meet, the probability is in the same ratio that this would not take place just in that direction, in which the prism will enter its sheath ; — not to mention, that chance is likewise burdened with the task of having originally prepared this adaptation between the prism and its receptacle. Now, if the theory of chance be wholly at fault in a single, and that comparatively so simple a case, how is it to be applied to the innumerable parts, the stupendous contrivances and changes of the whole system of nature ? We deem it no slight honor to the genius of a great man, when he is able by a sort of prophetic eye to anticipate some of the laws or facts, which are afterwards brought to light in the economy of the universe. Descartes, in opposing the theory of the progressive motion of light, advanced the objection that, if this theory were correct, the celestial bodies would not be seen in their true places.

The progress of astronomical science has established the fact, that the stars are not seen in their true places for just the reason assigned by that profound philosopher<sup>1</sup> in his objection. Kant, reasoning from analogy, predicted the discovery of those planets, which were afterwards made known by Herschell and other observers. Anticipations like these are not mere fortuitous suggestions; they are, in almost every case, the result of principles of reasoning, consistently applied and followed out in their consequences. Now, if the discovery, or the prediction of the discovery, of some single fact or law in nature be the result of calculation, or of the use of means purposely and wisely applied, who will suppose that the whole mighty system itself, with all its appurtenances, proportions, and ends, is the work of blind chance? If it require forecast and reasoning merely to become acquainted with some little corner of a vast edifice, shall it be said that the whole structure itself was reared without plan, design, or intelligence?

But the most deeply interesting considerations and evidences in the province of natural religion are those connected with the intelligent nature of man, his moral sentiments and moral wants. Amidst all the varieties of situation and circumstances, amidst the happy or unhappy influences, to which mankind are exposed, and amidst the countless diversities in their habits of thought and tastes in other respects, we find some common features of resemblance deeply marked in the tendency to look above to a spiritual power, and forward to a future world. Man is by his constitution a religious being; and wherever or in whatever condition he is found, this part of his nature is never wholly torpid or dead. When we say, that the religious principle is a constituent part of our being, we are not about to revive the old dispute, whether the idea of God be innate in the human mind. We think it has been for the most part a dispute about words, rather than things. But we regard the fact of a universal consent of mankind (for universal it may justly be called, notwithstanding the few insufficient exceptions discovered or pretended) in the reception of certain points of belief with regard to the future and invisible world, as a very important fact in the way of evidence. The religious sentiment is so deeply rooted in man, that, as his moral history abundantly testifies, although it may be dislodged for a

time, or in some portions of the race, by incidental and temporary influences, it always recovers its place and power. The Roman orator described only the simple fact when he said of it, '*hoc omnibus est innatum et insculptum.*' It has been thrown into a thousand grotesque and revolting forms; superstition has erected upon it her oppressive systems of folly and cruelty; the artifices of the cunning and the tyranny of the powerful have taken advantage of its agency to hold men in the bondage of fear and servility, or to make their passions the subservient instruments of a crafty ambition; and there is scarcely any exhibition of extravagance, which, under the misemployed sanction of its influence, men have not thought a sacred duty. But, notwithstanding these abuses, which might seem enough to alienate mankind from its sway, it has always lived with a fresh and strong power in the human constitution, as a marked distinction between our race and the lower orders of animals. It is a vital principle within, which nothing has been able to tread out, nothing has extinguished, nothing has crushed. The fact, that it bears and has borne so much without sinking under it, is of itself sufficient to show how deeply it is planted, how indestructibly it is lodged, in the human frame. The prince of English philosophers did but express what history proves to have been the common and spontaneous feeling of man, when he said, 'I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind.' Can we, then, suppose that a sentiment, which thus manifests itself to be one of the elements wrought into our nature, is all a cheat and a delusion, that it is continually practising falsehoods upon us, that there is no reality whatever correspondent to its suggestions, and that we are doomed to be the dupes of its fallacy? We do not judge thus with regard to other parts of our nature. When we find principles or faculties common to man all over the world, showing themselves steadily and constantly in the development of his being, belonging to him at every stage of his progress and under all circumstances, we believe that the objects to which they relate have a foundation in truth and reality. Why should we not believe so of that elementary sentiment in our constitution, which speaks and has always spoken to mankind of a power, wisdom, and providence far higher than human, of a connexion



between this scene of things and an invisible agency, and of a state of being beyond that in which we now live, to which we stand in some manner related?

The atheist may attempt to resolve this sentiment into the effect of false and artificial impressions; he may tell us that it is all the offspring at first of ignorant and blind fear, and may affirm, in the language of the ancient poet,

Primus in orbe Deos fecit timor —

that in order to awe the simple these fears were systematized and augmented by those, who behind the scene derided what policy induced them to teach, that these notions are transmitted and enforced by all the power of education and tradition, and that they have really no root in the human mind. But this vague, superficial, and flippant way of despatching the subject will never satisfy those, who have looked with a truly philosophical eye on the constitution of man.\* It falls far short of accounting for the facts, which the moral history of our race exhibits. It does not explain that natural sense of God and of religion, which is developed with something like the power of an instinct whenever the interior life of man unfolds and expands itself; which struggles up towards some knowledge of truths relating to the Divinity and its own immortal destination, as soon as reason begins its operations; and which has the characters of the other properties natural to mankind, insomuch that we know not whether it would be too much to assert, that you might as rationally expect to find man without the external senses or the power of speech, as without the religious sentiment.†

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\* For some very sound remarks on the false sources to which the religious principle has been ascribed, see the recent and excellent work of Constant, *De la Religion, &c.* i. 13-20.

† The following somewhat homely and odd, but forcible, illustration of this point is given by Dr. Henry More: — "If we were travelling in a desolate wilderness, where we could discover neither man nor house, and should meet with herds of cattle or flocks of sheep, upon whose bodies there were branded certain marks or letters, we should without any hesitancy conclude that these have all been under the hand of some man or other, that hath set his name upon them. And verily when we see writ in our souls in such legible characters the name, or rather the nature and idea, of God, why should we be so slow and backward from making the like reasonable inference?" *Antidote against Atheism*, p. 27.

Considerations like these have always been powerfully felt by some of the most enlightened minds. They have been carried so far as to furnish occasion, incorrectly we think, for inferences to the disparagement of all attempts to prove the truths relating to a spiritual and future world by any process or chain of mere argument. In the system of Kant the existence of the Deity is considered as a postulate of practical reason. Theoretical reason, it is said, cannot solve the problems which practical reason desires to have solved. The evidence, by which the great truth in question is to be established, must be drawn from the moral being and moral necessities of man ; and the wisdom of God, it is alleged, is manifested in the very fact, that his existence and attributes cannot be demonstrated by the process of man's speculative reason.\* Another German philosopher, Basedow, attempts to prove the truths of natural religion on the ground, that these truths are indispensable to human happiness. If there be, he says, a principle, which is so inseparably interwoven with man's happiness, that it cannot exist without supposing the truth of that principle, then man is bound to receive it and assent to it. He next endeavours to prove that without God, Providence, and Immortality, the happiness of man is impossible ; consequently, he supposes that by this reasoning these great truths are safely established, and placed beyond doubt. Now if views like these be in some respects unsatisfactory, considered strictly as arguments, yet they evince how strongly the importance of taking into the account the nature of the human constitution has been felt by the most philosophical minds. They may be adjudged unsound, if tried by certain standards of metaphysical reasoning ; but the foundations on which they rest are those, on which mankind do and ever will repose some of their best and firmest faith. The belief in God, in His attributes, and in a future existence, is *a want* of our moral nature, a deep, inevitable, pervading want. We feel it to be so ; we feel that without it all is incongruity, perplexity, and darkness, that every thing about us is an enigma not to be solved, and that we are an inexplicable riddle to ourselves, that we are surrounded by appearances, which come and go as shadows with no object and no

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\* Buhle's 'Geschichte der neuern Philosophie,' vi. 672.

meaning, that this belief alone gives completeness to the explanation of human life, and satisfies that principle within us, the existence of which is a matter of consciousness, and which is ever springing up beyond the limits of the present condition of being, and striving to lay hold of those spiritual objects to which it feels within itself an irrepressible tendency and relation.

The human soul, moreover, is led to regard itself as the expression and the effect of a divine Power. On this token of such a Power some have delighted peculiarly to dwell, and have found in it more complete and satisfactory evidence than elsewhere. The mind turns its contemplation inward upon itself, observes the subtile and curious laws which regulate thought and feeling, and in that world of wonders within the breast recognises the same God, the evidence of whose wisdom and glory is written on the outward universe.

There is a part of our nature, which perceives and judges of truth, comprehends the relations and proportions of things, explores the labyrinths of nature, follows the winding and intricate chain of causes and effects, investigates the several departments of the animal, mineral, and vegetable kingdoms, measures the distances and traces the laws of systems, reduces to an exact science the movements of revolving worlds, constructs elaborate and profound systems of policy, refines and elevates society with countless inventions and improvements, kindles and transmits along the generations of men that light of thought, which time cannot quench. There is a part of our nature, in which the whole province of motives and affections is found; and who is ignorant of their power to quicken abstract belief into moral love and moral action, to twine themselves around the duties and the efforts of man, and bestow upon them a charm which identifies them with the sources of our most refined pleasures? There is conscience, which sits on a throne of judgment in the inner man, operating as a quick and instinctive sense of right and wrong, making the heart tremble at its rebuke, or exult in the warm 'well done,' with which it welcomes good intentions and good deeds. There are sympathies, springing up spontaneously with the growth of our moral powers, strengthening and brightening the bond that unites us in the social state at first, and then keeps us together amidst the darkness, the storms, and the disasters of life, multiplying and

sweetening the relations among mankind, and causing them so to act and react on one another, that no one liveth for himself alone and no one dieth for himself. All these are parts of our constitution, the existence of which is a simple matter of fact. Now with regard to their origin and purpose, what is the conclusion to which unvitiated reason would lead us? What but that our moral and intellectual nature is the work of One, who 'hath made man in the image of His own eternity'? What but that the principle of thought and of moral feeling is an emanation from the fountain itself of heavenly light? The religious philosophy of old, which taught that the human soul is a particle of the Divine Mind, was the ready and natural expression of such a conclusion: and however mysterious or romantic might be some of the conceptions associated with this doctrine, the foundation of it was laid in a great and beautiful truth. The spiritual nature had a consciousness of its high origin, which it could not shake off; it heard from the depths of its own existence intimations of its birth-place, from which it seemed to itself to have wandered far away; it deemed its residence in the body an exile, a banishment from its native home, to which in its contemplative hours of reflection and of pure feeling it sought with ardent longing to return. We may well pardon such a philosophy many of its erratic fancies, when we remember that the nucleus, around which it is gathered, unquestionably lies in the very nature of our intellectual and moral frame, and that it gave a noble and elevated turn to the speculations of its votaries.\*

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\* A striking specimen of the mode of philosophizing on these subjects referred to above is given by one of the most eminent Oriental scholars of recent times, in a beautiful description of the metaphysical theology embraced by a numerous sect both of the ancient and modern Persians. 'Their fundamental tenets,' he says, 'are, that nothing exists absolutely but God; that the human soul is an emanation from his essence, and, though divided for a time from its heavenly source, will be finally re-united with it; that the highest possible happiness will arise from its re-union, and that the chief good of mankind in this transitory world consists in as perfect an *union* with the Eternal Spirit, as the incumbrances of a mortal frame will allow; that for this purpose they should break all *connexion* (or *ta'alluk*, as they call it,) with extrinsic objects, and pass through life without *attachments*, as a swimmer in the ocean strikes freely without the impediment of clothes; that they should be straight and free as the cypress whose fruit is



It is a consideration, which deserves to be well weighed and is of a nature kindred to those just stated, that the evidences for the being and perfections of God, and for spiritual truth in general, are perceived in their true and best power only in a sound state of the heart and of the affections. We do not mean, of course, that the estimation of truth is a mere matter of feeling. But we do believe that in proportion as our moral nature is purified, our intellectual nature is in not only a more favorable, but a more just, state for appreciating and realizing the evidences of all truth, whether natural or revealed. There is no affectation of a mysterious privilege for the good, no pretension to superior illumination, in this statement. We merely declare what is found to be a fact in accordance with the laws of the human constitution. The principle, that an investigation or a pursuit, in order to be conducted successfully and faithfully, requires an aptness or congeniality of mind for that investigation or pursuit, is a general principle, which we apply without hesitation on other subjects. It is equally applicable to the judgments we form of high moral truths. The habitual tastes and the state of feeling we bring to these subjects have a great, however silent and unobserved, influence on our estimate of evidence and on our appreciation of the results, to which it should conduct the mind. Soundness of moral sentiment, and the culture of the better parts of our spiritual frame, not only create a stronger interest in the fundamental truths of all religion, but enable us to perceive more clearly their bearings and relations, the foundations on which they rest, and the sort of proof of which they are susceptible in reference to the human mind. These are, after all, not

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hardly perceptible, and not sink under a load like fruit-trees *attached* to a trellis; that if mere earthly charms have power to influence the soul, the *idea* of celestial beauty must overwhelm it in extatic delight; that, for want of apt words to express the divine perfections and the ardor of devotion, we must borrow such expressions as approach the nearest to our ideas, and speak of *Beauty* and *Love* in a transcendent and mystical sense; that, like a *reed* torn from its native bank, like *wax* separated from its delicious honey, the soul of man bewails its disunion with *melancholy music*, and sheds burning tears like the lighted taper, waiting passionately for the moment of its extinction, as a disengagement from earthly trammels, and the means of returning to its Only Beloved.' *Sir William Jones's Works*, Vol. III. 130.

mere questions for the academic exercise of the intellect. There is a light springing up from unvitiated moral feeling, which is frequently, perhaps always, a better guide to important truth, than the logical efforts of the understanding can afford without it. With some of the early Christian writers it was a favorite doctrine, that the will must be in a sound and pure state before the understanding can arrive at the knowledge of God. Theophilus compares the human soul to a mirror, which must be cleansed from the stains of sin in order to reflect the image of the Divinity.\* We believe the cases are rare, in which the atheist or the scoffer will be found to manifest good taste, or a high standard of thought, even on points unconnected with religious inquiries. Voltaire was a man, who could not well appreciate any great or elevated subject. He had as little apprehension of the lofty or the spiritual in literature, as in religion. He flouted Christianity and jeered the government of God in the same vein that he ridiculed Homer as a prolix and heavy storyteller, and Plato as an inflated babbler; and his 'Candide,' that poor pasquinade upon Providence, is an exhibition of the same vitiated taste, which led him to despise the masterworks of ancient poetry and philosophy. It is related, that when the disciples of Zoroaster inquired of him, how their souls might become prepared to soar aloft amidst the effulgence of Divine Truth, he directed them to bathe in *the waters of life*; and when they further asked what these were, he replied, 'the four Cardinal Virtues, which are the four Rivers of Paradise.' There was fine wisdom, a noble significance, in the answer of the old sage. The best part of the life of man's intellect is palsied by that sensual turn of thought, that determination towards reckless levity and merry scorn, under the influence of which every elevated taste is benumbed, as by the touch of a torpedo.

The work of Dr. Crombie, which stands at the head of this article, is a valuable and praiseworthy contribution to the cause of Natural Theology. This author has been favorably known in the metaphysical world by his 'Essay on Philosophical Necessity,' to which, whatever may be thought of the opinions it supports, must be conceded the praise of

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\* Münscher's 'Handbuch der Christlichen Dogmengeschichte,' i. 386.

presenting an ingenious, candid, and argumentative investigation of a very abstract and perplexing subject. His views on this question involved him in a controversy with Dr. James Gregory, to whose 'Letters' he published 'Replies' in 1820. His '*Natural Theology*,' the work now before us, is evidently the fruit of thorough reflection and painstaking inquiry. It exhibits an elaborate survey of the great questions belonging to the subject, sometimes too diffuse and heavy, but conducted throughout with ability, and, some few things excepted, in a truly philosophical manner. One of the highest praises of the work is the spirit of fairness and impartiality, in which it is written. Dr. Crombie discovers no reluctance to controvert what he considers an unsound argument, though it might seem to make for his own cause, or to withhold any concession required by just reasoning; no disposition to cover up and conceal weak places; no desire to wink out of sight difficulties and objections. This merit, we regret to say, is not very common among writers on either side of these topics. Natural religion has defences too strong to need the aid of weak or rotten outworks. Its cause, like every other, is only injured by contending for untenable positions, while it has so much ground that is securely fortified; and he is not its wise friend, who is not willing to spare such professed allies, as embarrass rather than strengthen its power.

Before proceeding to the main business of his work, Dr. Crombie institutes an able inquiry into the causes of atheism. These are assigned and explained with discrimination and good sense; but there are some important views of the origin of skeptical tendencies, which are either omitted or imperfectly presented. This investigation is followed by Essays on the leading questions of natural religion, which are discussed apparently with a single aim at the discovery of truth, rather than for the support of previously assumed opinions; and at the same time, an excellent moral feeling pervades and animates the whole.

In the first Essay, which treats of the Existence of Deity, our author examines the argument by which Dr. Clarke attempts to disprove the eternity of matter. This argument he considers as unsatisfactory, and his refutation of it is a specimen of acute and vigorous reasoning. He then, in an able manner, shows the utter incredibility and the unphiloso-

sophical character of the theory, that matter, having existed from eternity, has assumed by accident or necessity the forms in which it appears at present. The atheistical hypotheses of Hume, and of Drummond, author of the 'Academic Questions,' and the system of Spinoza, are examined at considerable length, and their fallacy skilfully detected. The nature of the several kinds of evidence is explained; metaphysical evidence is considered as inapplicable to the question at issue; and the principles of the *a posteriori* argument are stated and illustrated. This argument is pursued in its application to the constitution and phenomena of the heavenly bodies, to the modes in which the living beings on the earth are produced, the means by which they are sustained, and their relations to the agencies that are in operation around them. The illustrations under this head drawn from the constitution of the atmosphere and of water seem to us peculiarly striking. The consideration of the evidences of a designing and intelligent Cause is pursued with reference to the organ of sight, the intellectual and moral nature of man, &c. A long chapter, written with impartiality and acuteness, is devoted to the attributes of Deity. From the nature of the discussion contained in this Essay, it is manifest that some of the statements and of the reasoning cannot have the recommendation of novelty. But they have, what is better on a subject like this, the recommendation of being presented with much power and in a happy manner. They are skilfully chosen, and made to bear in a convincing way on the point at issue. If the author has not conducted his argument in that terse, compact, and pointed manner, which has given such well-deserved popularity to Paley's work, he evinces a thorough comprehension of the subject, a clear perception and a judicious discrimination of the nature of his proofs, and a power of happy application in the use of the facts furnished by natural and intellectual philosophy.

The second Essay treats of Providence; and here the author defends the doctrine of a universal, or as it is more commonly called, a *particular* providence.

In the third Essay the question concerning the immateriality of the soul is argued with much acuteness, just thought, and extensive research. An elaborate view is taken of the arguments urged by the materialists against the existence of



a principle in man distinct in its nature from matter. These are examined with logical caution and discrimination, and are shown to proceed on false assumptions, or false principles of reasoning, or to be inapplicable to the question. The evidences of the existence of a principle in man, distinct from all the modifications of matter, but connected in the exercise of its energies with a material organization, are then exhibited with perspicuity and force. The reader, we think, will find peculiar satisfaction in this portion of Dr. Crombie's work. The following is an interesting view of the process of the human mind from materialism to immaterialism in its speculations.

‘Man, in every stage and condition of his being, is occupied with sensible objects. These at all times engage his chief attention. In his earliest and rudest state of existence, he thinks of nothing but providing for the necessities of corporeal nature. Of his mental constitution he is profoundly ignorant. Seeing nothing around him but matter and its changing forms, he has no conception of the possibility of any other, than material substance. If surrounding phenomena should impress him with the belief, that there are beings superior to himself, he imagines them to be corporeal. He entertains no apprehension of any existent, which is not visible or tangible. He is a Materialist. As his experience however extends, he becomes more and more acquainted with the qualities and properties of physical objects. Ages elapse before he proceeds beyond the limits prescribed by external sense. But, as he progresses in knowledge, his curiosity is proportionably excited; and acquiring, in the advancement of society, accompanied with some degree of civilization, more leisure for reflection, he begins to look inward to his own mind, and mark with attention, what passes there. When he becomes acquainted with its **various** faculties, and what they are capable of accomplishing, observing also the subserviency of the body to the government of the will, he perceives, that his mental powers are so unlike to the qualities and properties of gross matter, that they must belong, he concludes, to something of a more refined character, than brute material substance. Unable, however, to divest himself of the notion, that nothing can exist, which may not be seen or touched, he forms a conception of some attenuated matter, some aërial being, by whatever name it may be called, whether soul, or breath, or spirit, which lives, and thinks within him. It is still, however, material; and he perceives on reflection, that the difficulty, though apparently diminished, is not remov-

ed. He is thence led to proceed one step farther, and to conclude, that the simple indivisible being, which he believes himself to be, can have no resemblance to matter, which is composed of parts.

Immaterialism then, it would seem, is not the doctrine of a rude and uncultivated mind. It is the result of examination and reflection. It can obtain only, when philosophy has shed her light over the constitution of man, as an intelligent being ; and, wherever it does obtain, is an infallible evidence of considerable progress in metaphysical science.' — Vol. II. pp. 451 – 453.

Perhaps the absolute materialism of man's notions in the rudest forms of his existence is here stated in rather too unqualified a manner. Pistorius, in his Notes on Hartley has remarked, that 'the enriching of philosophy with the idea of immateriality may be ascribed to the beneficial influence of the Christian religion.' We believe, nevertheless, that the germ of this idea may be discovered even amidst the rude and early speculations of man about his own nature, or about the phenomena of the universe.

Dr. Crombie's last Essay is on a Future State. The question, whether reason, or the light of nature, affords just ground to expect that we shall live again after our present form of existence shall have ceased, has always been one of trembling anxiety and intense interest to those, who have not enjoyed the blessing of revelation. We think, that the full light, which the Gospel, inculcating its lessons under the clear sanction of Divine Authority, has thrown on the doctrine of a future state of retribution, is beyond all price. But we do not understand why it is, therefore, necessary or reasonable to abandon all other evidence of this great truth ; nor are we prepared to say, in the unqualified language of Bishop Watson in his letter to Gibbon, that we 'have *no hope* of a future existence, except what is grounded on the truth of Christianity.' We believe that there are other indications and other considerations, in which just grounds of such an expectation may be found ; though we are well aware, that these without Christianity would be but imperfect and inefficient, considered as affording a place of satisfactory rest for the hopes of man. The question of a future life, treated simply and only as a question of unassisted reason, is discussed in a very interesting, and generally a

very able manner, in a work published in London four or five years since, with the title 'Immortality or Annihilation?' &c., though the book contains some things from which we should dissent. The view which Dr. Crombie has taken of this important subject is ingenious, and as satisfactory perhaps as any process of reasoning on such a topic can be. He maintains that even the materialist, who does not admit the truth of revelation, has no rational ground to reject as an absurdity the doctrine, that man may survive the dissolution of his body. In the statement of the argument for a future life drawn from conscience, the following striking observations occur with regard to the nature of the moral sentiment in man.

'Difficult as it may be to distinguish between sentiments implanted in our constitution, and those originating in education, we have reason to believe, that our genuine feelings are friendly to the happiness of our fellow-creatures; and that, antecedently to all rule, there are certain actions, to which we are spontaneously prompted, and others, from which we shrink with abhorrence. But, if all our moral sentiments were resolvable into education, it would follow, that man is wholly a factitious being; and that all actions, not affecting ourselves, would be equally indifferent to us; that we should hear the moanings of pain, the shriek of sorrow, and the laugh of joy, with equal unconcern; that we should behold a fellow-creature writhing in agony, and another relieved from suffering, with one and the same, or with no, emotion; and that benevolence and malignity, love and hatred, might be equally gratifying, or interchange their pleasures and pains, as early impressions might happen to have directed. It would be as easy to convince me, that darkness is as agreeable to the eye, as the light of day; a scream as delightful to the ear, as musical sounds; and that we might be so trained by education, as to make the rose and its thorn equally pleasing to the touch. In every attempt to resolve all moral feelings and emotions into education, it seems uniformly taken for granted, that, because education does much, nature does nothing. That the savage may be taught to exult in the sufferings of his captive enemy, or the tyrant feel a sort of pleasure in satisfying his revenge, is true. But mark the look of either in the moment of gratification, and contrast it with the complacent smile in the countenance of the man, who has just relieved a fellow-creature from distress, and then say, which is the gratification the more congenial to our nature.' — Vol. II. pp. 495, 496.

The imperfect outline we have given of the contents of this work is sufficient to show, that, if it be well executed, it must be an important addition to our treatises of religious philosophy. We think it is well executed ; and among the numerous works on natural theology, we know of none in our language, which is better adapted to answer its purpose. We do not mean to say, that we assent to all we find in this work ; for some of the speculations have failed to give us the satisfaction, which they have furnished to the mind of the author. But, as a whole, the work deserves no common praise, as a comprehensive, acute, and impartial investigation of the important topics of natural religion. We should be glad to see it reprinted in this country, believing that though it may not be sufficiently popular in its character for general use, it will afford light and strength of conviction to the large class of thoughtful and well-informed minds in our community.

It should not be forgotten, that the evidence for the truths of natural religion is not despatched in a single statement, or a single process of reasoning, but is the combined result of considerations and arguments drawn from various sources, each of which contributes its portion to increase the strength and swell the amount of the whole. A phalanx of the highest probabilities is thus presented, which no mind that acknowledges the common principles of all reasoning can resist, without evincing a strange credulity in receiving difficulties and absurdities. The attempt has very injudiciously been made to apply mathematical reasoning to these subjects ; and we remember to have seen a work, in which all the parade of diagrams and of geometrical demonstration was used for this purpose. There are minds, to which such a mode of arguing may seem at first very attractive, because it appears to promise the absolute certainty of the exact sciences ; but by failing, as it must, to perform its promise, it leads in the end to more doubt than conviction. Besides, it should be remembered, that the assurance left on the mind by an overwhelming mass of probable evidence is not to be distinguished, in the strength of its effect, from that produced by mathematical proofs. There are surely many things, which no one pretends to demonstrate, but which every one believes as firmly as any proposition in Euclid. So far as the actual satisfaction of the mind is concerned,



therefore, we need not the demonstrative mode of proof that belongs to the exact sciences. The difficulties and doubts, which accompany some of our speculations in natural theology, arise almost wholly from the necessary imperfection of our faculties and of our situation in this stage of being. We occupy a small nook, as it were, in the vast creation, and our vision is at best feeble and limited; how then can it be, that our knowledge of the physical laws and the spiritual truths of the universe should not be inadequate and obscure? Christianity, in the lofty and glorious views which it opens, teaches us to expect a brighter day, a larger growth of the rational nature, when the soul shall be as a mirror for the distinct reflection of all truth, and the enlightened and purified mind shall not need the slow process of argument in order to believe all that relates to God and immortality. To the child, or the ignorant man, nothing seems more confused and disorderly than the motions of the heavenly bodies; but to the eye of the scientific astronomer they present a sublime order, a magnificent harmony, even in their apparent anomalies and aberrations. Will there not be a far greater difference between our conceptions of God and of His universe in the childhood of this world, and those which shall dawn and brighten upon our souls in the manhood of another world? After all, the best we can do here is to gain glimpses of truth, which twinkle from afar, and beckon the spirit forward to a time, when these glimpses shall be enlarged into the broad, beautiful, and clear light of day, as those bright specks in the expanse of the firmament, which, at first, to the naked eye seemed only small glimmering points, are at length discovered by the aid of the telescope to be suns, and worlds, and systems.

At the present time it is peculiarly important, that the topics of which we have spoken should be considered faithfully and seriously. Amidst the wild strife of opinions, amidst the rapid fermentation of blind zeal and heedless party spirit, amidst the visions of ignorant or half-enlightened minds accredited for truths, there has grown up a spirit of profligate irreligion, — a giddy recklessness that laughs to scorn the hopes and the trusts of piety, and calls them all alike a mockery and a delusion, — a cold and heartless feeling of contempt for all that is elevated, which stigmatizes as folly every thing, that would carry us beyond the scramble and the dust of this world, or that would

teach us to look for higher joys than those of sense. It becomes every friend to the welfare of society to pause, and consider whither such a spirit would lead. What is the work, which it would achieve? It would take from man that, by which alone he is finally to be better than the beast that labors for him; it would rob the poor of the secret wealth of the soul; it would deny to the deserted their best, their only friend, to the wretched their hidden solace, to the wandering their guide, to the afflicted their comfort, to the wounded spirit its healing balm, to the departing soul the hope that warms even the chill of death; it would bring a dark and heavy cloud over creation, and leave the universe without a Presiding Mind; nature, which to the eye of rational faith is so full of rich, magnificent, and holy associations, would become a dead, unmeaning scene; the notes of praise and gladness would no more be heard from it, — the monuments of wisdom and love no more seen in it; the world would become blank, cold, and cheerless as the tombs of the departed, which hold only the lifeless ashes of the once animated frame; and we should find there is as much of truth, as of poetical wildness, in that celebrated vision, in which the romantic imagination of Richter has portrayed the dismay of creation, searching for a Deity and finding none. We have no apprehension, indeed, that religion can ever be driven from society. The hand of the Omnipotent has placed a strong guard around this consecrated interest, which the poor delusions of man will in vain essay to break down. All history shows, that, though atheism and reckless skepticism may from certain causes spread to some extent, yet men are at length carried back to the fundamental principles of religion by an irresistible tendency of their moral constitution. But even the temporary and partial mischief, which this folly may occasion, is sufficiently fearful to excite the deepest interest in every friend of mankind. Nothing can be more important, than that the religious sentiment of the community should be enlightened, guarded, and strengthened. All the sources, from which it may receive purity and warmth, whether in nature or in revelation, should be opened upon the mind; and man should be accustomed to feel that he stands, as a priest, in the midst of the magnificent temple of God's creation, to offer the praise of a devout heart, and to render the service of reverence, of love, and of duty.

ART. V. — *The Story of the Life of Lafayette, as told by a Father to his Children.* By the Author of the 'Children's Robinson Crusoe.' Boston. Hilliard, Gray, Little, and Wilkins. 1831. 18mo. pp. 284.

PARENTS and those interested in children will greet this 'Story' with pleasure, for several reasons. It is written in a style of good, idiomatic English; and that is a praise which cannot be often heartily awarded to American books for children. How few of our writers put plain and simple words together with elegant propriety; and how many, in aiming to be intelligible, sink into childishness or vulgarity. The unformed literary taste of the rising generation seems in some danger of being perverted by the bad style in which some of our popular books for children are written.

The moral and religious tone of this work is pure and elevated. The author has drawn the character of Lafayette, we think, so as to win the young to love and admire true heroism, and so as to teach them to distinguish between genuine greatness of soul and its often attractive counterfeit.

We have mentioned some of our author's claims to the approbation of the parents and guides of young people; for we do not quite agree with those who say, 'Let children themselves be our critics; if we satisfy them, it is enough. We care not for the censure of grown-up readers.' It is very true that children are the only judges as to what is *interesting* to them, and if a writer has not talent enough to please them, grown people may commend his excellent works in vain; — they will not be read. But children are not the best judges of what is *fit* for them. A boy will devour a book which is full of amusing facts or pleasant fancies, though the author may be weakening his moral sense in every page, or murdering the king's English in every sentence. The works of 'Peter Parley' are favorites with children, on some accounts deservedly so; but we do not think his young readers would be less charmed with them, and we are sure his older ones would more heartily approve them, if they were freed from the faults of careless composition; and his accounts of foreign countries would not be less entertaining, were he to weed from them all false and illiberal views of foreign character and manners.

The book before us, we are happy to say, is not wanting in those qualities which will render it attractive to children. First, it is true ; — and we all know that the first question of a child respecting a favorite hero is, ‘ Was he a real man ? ’ In the next place, the moral truth is not brought in as it were by force, as is often the case in books intended to do good to children as well as to amuse them. The entertaining and the edifying seem to spring up naturally together, like the wild flowers and green grass under our feet. The author does not insert a regular sermon every few pages, as the manner of some is, for the little reader to — skip ; but there is a concealed sermon running through the whole book, and the child is unconsciously made wiser and better while he reads.

We find here much of that tact, so unattainable by those who have not ‘ the gift,’ which enables a writer for the time to ‘ become as a little child ’ ; to see with the eyes, and to feel with the heart of childhood. There is great spirit and variety both in the narrative and in the dialogue. Questions and remarks are not put in at random merely to break up the narrative ; but the individuals in the little family party have distinct characters, which are naturally unfolded by whatever they say and do. The power of giving individuality to the *dramatis personæ* of a novel, a play, or a little book for children, is a rare and a happy one.

We take leave of our author with the hope that she will continue her good works in the field where so many are sowing weeds or unfruitful seed ; — and of the Hero, for whom she has kindled our admiration anew, in the words of Fuller, — ‘ Such a man’s soul is an impregnable fort : it cannot be scaled with ladders, for it reacheth up to heaven ; nor undermined by pioneers, for it is founded upon a rock ; nor betrayed by treason, for faith itself keeps it ; nor be forced by famine, for a good conscience is a continual feast.’

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ART. VI. — *Sermons, accompanied by suitable Prayers, designed to be used in Families.* Vol. II. Edited by the Rev. J. R. BEARD. London. 1831. 8vo. pp. 503.

THE first volume of these Sermons was favorably noticed in our Number for November, 1830. The volume which is now published in continuation, is even more interesting than the other, because it not only contains excellent sermons from our English brethren, but presents them in connexion with excellent sermons from Unitarians of Geneva, and from our friends at home. Apart from the merit of the discourses, there is something highly gratifying in this union of kindred minds from three distant parts of the earth; this meeting of brethren in the only way in which it is probable they ever will meet, till they join each other beyond the grave.

Thirty sermons are comprised in this volume. The first in order is by Dr. Tuckerman, entitled 'The Gospel a Blessing to the Poor.' Of this sermon Mr. Beard thus speaks in his Preface;

'Great as is the importance of most of the subjects treated of in this volume, the Editor feels assured that many will think with him, in placing before all others the merciful attention to the moral and spiritual wants of the neglected poor, which is enforced in a manner that does equal credit to his principles as a Christian and his talents as a writer, in the sermon by Dr. Tuckerman. The Editor ventures to entertain a hope, that this discourse may do something to forward the establishment, in this country, of missions similar to that which exists in Boston; and to lead the members of families to use — each and all, the young and the old, male and female — to use their influence in exertions, made by themselves, not by proxy, in a degree greater than may have hitherto been done, to improve the moral, spiritual, and physical condition of the poor and depraved of their respective neighbourhoods.' — pp. vii, viii.

To this we respond a sincere Amen; and we trust that our English brethren will soon be able to tell us, that they have not only equalled but surpassed our own efforts in offering the blessings of the Gospel to the poor and destitute. We shall rejoice, and esteem them highly favored, if they obtain the services of such a man as Dr. Tuckerman. He will rejoice, if they obtain better services than his.

There are two other valuable discourses by Americans in this volume ; sermon the sixth, on 'The Religion of Principle, and the Religion of the Affections,' by Professor Ware, Jr., and sermon the sixteenth, on 'The Formation and Progress of the Christian Character,' by Mr. Parkman.

The character of the Genevan sermons is decidedly French. They are translated by the editor, and, as we should think, well. But we cannot agree with him in the estimate which he has formed of them. We do not deny them merit, but we do deny them the superlative merit which he claims for them. Mr. Beard expresses a hope that they may exercise an influence in his own country. Does he not forget the difference between the English and the Genevan character ? If the English pulpit lacks warmth, it is desirable that warmth should, from some quarter, be infused into it. But is it not possible, is it not a fact, that what sounds warm and soul-stirring to a Genevan ear, may fall coldly and without effect on the ear of an Englishman or a New-Englander ? Mr. Beard says of these sermons, 'There may be those, who, forgetting what is the legitimate object of pulpit addresses and moral admonitions, may, under the influence of a taste as false as it is fastidious, pronounce them too declamatory ; but glad would the editor be, to abide by the result of an appeal to Christian men and women, made by the introduction into our pulpits and closets of discourses conceived and executed in the same style as are they.' We are not aware that our taste is fastidious ; but, however that may be, we will venture to pronounce a passage like the following to be too declamatory. It is from the twenty-third sermon, entitled 'Simon the Magician, or the Worldling subject to Two Masters,' by M. Cellerier. The preacher is describing the worldling, placed between the two masters whom he has pretended to serve.

'Born in the church, instructed in religion, he has seen what so many holy men and prophets in vain desired to know. Faith has invited him ; it has said to him, "My son, give me thy heart : I will make thee an heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ." But passion held him back ; cast her chains on him ; put into his hands the playthings of infancy ; and forbade him to raise his heart on high. He obeyed ; he trampled under foot the blood of the Son of God ; labored for what profited not ; and walked amid vain shows. Meanwhile, the storms of

life fell upon him, and threatened him with adverse fortune. Faith invited him, and said, "Come unto me, ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." But passion held him back: it stopped him in the midst of suffering; threw him on a rock; withheld all aid. He obeyed; he remained to the end, beaten by the tempest; in the midst of those clouds without water, those raging waves of the sea, those wandering stars, of which an Apostle speaks. The enemy of his salvation drew up against him, in array of battle, his various temptations. Faith invited him; it offered to him every spiritual and divine weapon, and said, "I am the victory over the world." But passion held him back; disarmed him, and led him, defenceless, to the monster sin. He obeyed; he prostituted, in the service of the creature, that heart, where the Creator wished to dwell; and sullied and defaced the image of his Maker.

'At last, the king of terrors stretched out his sceptre, and summoned him to appear. Faith invited him, and said, "I am the resurrection and the life; though thy sins be red like scarlet, they shall be white as snow." But passion held him back; darkened his understanding; oppressed his heart; commanded him to descend, alone and without support, into the valley of the death-shade. He obeyed. He rushed into the depths of eternity, seeking his gold, his pleasures, his luxury; and the miserable man found only the hymns of Seraphim,—only the holy and virtuous emotions of the children of God! Meanwhile, the judgment-seat is prepared: the law of liberty is opened, for a testimony; and that law, to which he had voluntarily submitted himself. He had never thought of it; scarcely did he know it. Oh! at the sight of this excess of folly and misfortune, the imagination is troubled; the mind is confused; and the soul, in amazement, can only exclaim, "O inconceivable error! O unfortunate man! O just Judge!"' — pp. 370–372.

We do not say that this is bad, but we say that it is too declamatory, at least for our feelings, and we do not wish at all that such a style may be introduced into our pulpits. We no more wish to see it there, than we do to see the most fanciful Swiss costumes in our streets or farmyards. In the beginning of this notice we called the Genevan sermons excellent. We really believe them to be so. We have read them with pleasure. But we do not believe the striking peculiarities of their style are such as we ought to transplant among ourselves. They do better on their own soil than they could on ours. The apostrophe, the abrupt appeal, the extended personifications, the crowded

interjections, do not suit us, and do not affect us, as they do the people of some other climes. While we do not admit these sermons to be models for the English or for us, we acknowledge their beauties, we allow their suitability for their proper audiences, and we are glad to see them in this volume, and give them a hearty welcome. A foreign brother must not doubt the sincerity or cordiality of his reception, because we do not salute him on both cheeks.

The sermons by English ministers in this collection, are prevailingly good. Dr. Carpenter's discourse on 'Glorifying God through Jesus Christ,' breathes the true spirit of practical Christianity; as does that of Dr. Ledlie, entitled 'The Bereaved Parent Comforted,' the spirit of Christian consolation. We give the following as a specimen of the style of the latter sermon. The author is speaking of the bereaved parents after the funeral of their child.

'And when these sad services are over, and he returns to what is now a home of sorrow, a thousand circumstances remind him of the loss he has suffered. He meets the partner of his life, the sharer of his affliction, the mother of his buried child; whilst sigh responds to sigh, and their tears are mingled in the communion of grief. Forgetting for a moment all that has passed, he unconsciously looks around him for one, who, with a joyous heart, used to welcome his coming — but alas! no light footstep is heard. One place is now seen unoccupied at the social table; and the hearth, late so cheerful, now shows one melancholy blank. He asks himself, is it indeed true that he shall behold his child no more upon this earth, — no more hear that voice which was wont to gladden him, — no more see that happy countenance, which used to make him forget all the cares and troubles of the world? Again, a temporary oblivion succeeds. He starts, as the moaning of the wind recalls the low complaining of his poor sufferer: and he listens, almost expecting to hear those sounds, that are now hushed for ever in the stillness of the grave. Whilst other eyes are closed in sleep, the bereaved parents wake only to sorrow, — endeavouring to conceal from each other the intensity of grief; or dwelling, with mournful satisfaction, on the virtues of the departed, and the sad loss which they have mutually sustained.

'Let me conduct such mourners, and many such there are, to that benevolent Being who came into the world to strengthen the feeble, and to comfort the afflicted. His bodily presence is



indeed withdrawn, and this earth shall no more be blessed with his sainted steps. But his spirit breathes around us in that religion which he has left for our support, and guidance; and his promises, on which we rely with unhesitating faith, come with living power, to cheer the disconsolate bosom.'—pp. 40, 41.

There is much instructive remark in Mr. Tagart's sermon on 'The Parables' of our Saviour, though we could wish one or two things in it altered. Do not the following observations require considerable modification before they can be deemed just?

'Again: there is this difference between the figurative lessons of the Saviour, and the fable of more polished countries, designed also for the inculcation of a moral, that he pictures to the mind only what is possible and probable. He gathers instruction from the real processes of nature and the genuine forms of character and life. He never endows the objects of the animate and inanimate creation with powers which do not belong to them, nor condescends to the almost puerile artifice of giving to things dumb and senseless the reason and the speech of man. How far his practice in this respect indicates his reverence for truth, and throws a tacit reproof upon the license of other fabulists, is a question perhaps worth considering.—pp. 213, 214.

We presume that Mr. Tagart would not have written the above exactly as it stands, if he had had in his mind some of the Old Testament parables, especially Jotham's of the trees and the bramble. Still more serious objection lies against some passages in this sermon, in which the parables of our Saviour are praised in very much the same manner as the works of a celebrated author are wont to be praised; the effect of which species of criticism is any thing but pleasant, and is precisely the reverse of that which the preacher sincerely intended to produce. The following is the passage which we have particularly in view.

'And with what skill does he compress into a narrow compass deep and important meaning! With a few strokes he traces the outline of a perfect drama; introduces his characters, disposes his incidents, and in a moment brings on the crisis which moves the breast of the spectator with distress and pity, or overwhelms him with shame and conscious guilt! With what genius and beauty does he bring his own figure into

view, and under characters the most various, important, and significant, assign to himself a prominent place in the arena of the moral world; the sower; the vine dresser; the proprietor of an estate; the careful shepherd; the just master; the compassionate father; the splendid bridegroom; the powerful nobleman; the heir of a kingdom; and the king upon his throne of glory, judging the whole world.

'It raises our idea of this genius to a sublime height, if we believe, as there is reason to believe, that these admirable compositions were not the slow product of industry, not the work of effort toiling after perfection, but struck off at the moment they were needed; the play of a master-spirit, indulging his own powers. — pp. 214, 215.

Genius is a word which we seldom or never have heard applied by Christians to Christ. It never ought to be so applied. We involuntarily shrink from such a use of the term. It does not exalt our conceptions of the Saviour, but disturbs and hurts them. It is a word for hundreds of mankind, but not for him. Neither should he be spoken of as 'tracing the outline of a drama,' 'introducing characters,' 'disposing of incidents,' and 'bringing on the crisis.' Our feelings tell us at once, that such phraseology and its associations are out place in connexion with our Saviour, and that they do not suit at all the sacred theme. But we say this with the strongest conviction that the author's purpose was good in this as well as every other portion of the sermon. We have noticed what we deem an error of judgment.

We might give many extracts from this volume, which we are sure would interest our readers, but we shall conclude with one from a sermon by the editor, addressed to 'Persons in the Middle Period of Life.'

'One half of life is gone! Solemn and affecting thought! The days of our years are half numbered. There is then truth in what they tell us of the transitoriness of all sublunary things. The story of our mortality is an awful reality, and not a fiction of the imagination. Within the same period as that we have lived, we shall be dust and ashes, or sinking under the weight and infirmities of age. There stand our parents and their contemporaries on the point of descending to the tomb; evidences of our mortal lot, and types of our future selves. A few more years, a few more hurried joys, a few more trials, a few more tears, and we, as they do now, shall stand beside our

tomb, and our little ones perhaps be then engaged in reflections such as those we at this moment make.

'One half of life is gone! how short the space appears! Yet short as it is, many who began the course together with ourselves, have died, without witnessing its termination. Many a youthful head, rich in promise, can we call to mind, which now rests on the clods of the valley; and many a bosom, where kindness largely dwelt, and whence we ourselves drew perchance large draughts of refreshing and nourishing affection, is now as cold as the sward by which it is for ever covered. Brief, then, as is the space now fled, it is longer much than what has been conceded to many. And of those who began the course of life together with ourselves, no few were there who, through their little day, far excelled us in the virtues of their season. Yet they are gone, and we are spared. We therefore owe not to our own merits, but to the sovereign mercy of the Controller of events, the prolongation of our being.

One half of existence gone! and our rational nature is only just beginning to be. We have as yet scarcely had time or opportunity to think, to ask whence and what we are, and what is our destiny, and whither we are going. We look around us, and find we know nothing of what it most concerns us to understand. We enter into account with the past, and find but few subjects of pleasurable reflection. The half of our being gone, before we can act as independent and individual beings! The habits of our childhood and youth are yet strong within us. Arrived at man's estate, we are yet, too many of us, children in understanding. One half of life spent in learning, and we not yet taught! One half passed in probation, and we yet unprepared for the cares and duties of active life! Alas! some perhaps have gone backward in wisdom as they have advanced in years, and become less fitted for the duties in the very proportion in which they have gone onward in life; each passing year having left its trace, not in holy but in vicious impressions.' — pp. 226–228.

Altogether, this volume, from the variety of its matter, and the ability and usefulness of its discourses, is one of the best collections for family reading which we know, and, as such, we take pleasure in recommending it. An American edition of it is in press, which will soon be published, as we are told, by Mr. Bowles of this city, who also published an edition of the first volume. Would it not be better, if the conductors of 'The Liberal Preacher' here, should publish a whole volume of that work at once, instead of sending it out in monthly numbers?

- ART. VII. — 1. *The Select Works of ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON, prepared for the Practical Use of Private Christians. With an Introductory View of the Life, Character, and Writings, of the Author.* By GEORGE B. CHEEVER. Boston. Peirce & Parker. 1832. 8vo. pp. 570.
2. *The complete Works of ROBERT LEIGHTON, D. D.,* some time Bishop of Dunblane, afterwards Archbishop of Glasgow. A new and enlarged Edition, together with *The Life of the Author*, by the Rev. G. JERMENT. Six vols. 8vo. London. 1828.

WE rejoice to find that the excellent works of the old divines of the seventeenth century are republishing among us; for they are worthy, and the memory of them is precious. It is a subject for congratulation, that, amidst the contentions of controversy, and much in the aspect of the civil and religious world for apprehension or grief; we may say too, amidst the accumulating stores of modern theology, which he, who takes pains to gather, must pull down his study and build a greater,—there is a disposition to look back to productions, not certainly of better but of former days, and to draw spiritual wisdom from sources which time has purified, and the piety of all Christians and of all periods will delight to honor. Such are the works of Baxter and of Leighton, of Hall and Taylor, of Bates and Barrow, of Howe and Tillotson. There are those, we know, whose opinions are not to be contemned, who affect to speak slightly of this last. Yet it is easier to condemn than to equal Tillotson, whether we consider his matter or his manner. The whole life of this truly Christian bishop was a beautiful commentary on his faithful preaching. And though undoubtedly he was a debtor for many things to Barrow, and, in some of his discourses, there may be found carelessness, or even tameness, yet who more skilfully has vindicated truth? who has better exposed the practical errors of his day, or recommended virtue with sweeter persuasion? To adopt one of his own expressions in his sermon ‘On the Happiness of a Heavenly Conversation,’ he speaks of heaven as if it was open to his view, and he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

We have said, that the times of these worthies were not better. They were, in truth, much worse than our own.



They were days of theological and political warfare, such as have seldom, for bitterness, been exceeded. The church and the state were convulsed ; and the moral condition of the people was such as might have been anticipated from the example of a profligate court, as was that of Charles, and from their own unsettled faith. It was partly to Leighton's disgust at these contentions, operating on a contemplative spirit and persuading him to withdraw from the contest, that we owe some of his choicest meditations. Happily, however, in this part of his example, he was not imitated by his brethren. In an age fruitful of great men of all professions, there were found in the church some of the wisest and purest that have ever adorned it, who stood firmly in their lot in the most perilous season, and to whose preaching, and writings, and active labors, adapted to the exigencies of the times, to the refutation of papal absurdities or of the cavils of infidelity, to the establishment of the Christian faith and the enforcement of a holy life, the nation under God stood indebted for the reformation that followed. Among these, as we have said, are the works of Baxter, and of others already named. And though we find reason to differ from the theological views upon which some of their ablest treatises were founded, though we must absolutely reject some of the doctrines which they were accustomed to mingle with their earnest exhortations to a holy life ; yet, regarding only the spirit with which they were animated, their love of God and of souls, the courage and fidelity with which they discharged their ministry, even 'as seeing Him who is invisible,' we are ready to say of them, with one whose heart had been opened by the things spoken of Paul, 'These men are servants of the Most High God to show to us the way of salvation.' We can accept or reject, according to our light, their interpretations of the oracles by which we must together be judged, but we acknowledge in their productions the power of Christian eloquence, and in their lives the beauty of holiness. Regarded in the practical influences they proposed, their works cannot be too much commended. To borrow a sentence from old Hooker, 'They are to beginners a familiar introduction, a mighty augmentation of virtue and knowledge in such as are entered before, a strong confirmation to the most perfect among others.' They are a legacy of spiritual instruction, to be preserved and cherished by all

posterity. And no one can better express their value, than does Bishop Burnet — himself not least to be honored among them — when he says to young ministers in those words often cited from ‘*The Pastoral Care*,’ — ‘By the frequent reading of these works, by that relish one has in them, by the delight they give and the effects they produce, a man will plainly perceive, whether his soul is made for divine matters or not; what suitableness there is between him and them; and whether he is touched with such a sense of religion as to be capable of dedicating himself to it.’

Of these writers, no one more deserves to be read, for there is none the study of whom will better repay the labor, than Leighton. He is spiritual and practical beyond all the rest; for he never troubles himself, as do Owen and Baxter, with metaphysical abstractions or needless argumentations, but takes for granted what most will admit, or perhaps none deny, and without useless applications to the brain to clear away doubts, enters at once and takes possession of the heart. His directness and brevity, too, are great recommendations, and they are almost peculiar to Leighton, in an age when, for the plainest subjects, elaborate treatises were composed; and he, who would exhort men to be honest, thought it necessary to prove first the being and perfections of a God, by whose law dishonesty would be judged.

A judicious selection, therefore, from the works of this admirable writer was much to be desired; and in making it, Mr. Cheever has conferred a favor on the religious community. Even those, who were already familiar with them, will be tempted to renew their gratification by the attractive dress in which they are now presented; and those, who are yet strangers, may be won to a study, in which it must be their own fault if they fail of benefit. And this, precisely, is the use of these new editions of our best ancient writers. They awake from the grave the sleeping dust. They strip of its grave-clothes the mouldering folio; and, arraying it in less cumbrous garments, they send it forth, as it were, to a new existence, for the instruction of another generation.

In the memoir prefixed to this work, the editor has assembled, with fidelity and judgment, the prominent, though not all the important, passages in the life of Bishop Leighton, with copious extracts from Burnet and other biographers. A fuller narrative of his history will be found in the work

of Jerment; but as a delineation of character, this, by Mr. Cheever, is highly interesting. It is a beautiful copy traced by no common hand, showing how well the artist had conceived, and how fervently also he admired, the original. There is, indeed, an ardor of admiration occasionally betraying to some slight extravagance of eulogy; yet, as a whole, it will be read, we doubt not, with lively pleasure. We were prepared to think favorably of the author's spirit from a few sentences in his preface, which are so much in accordance with the very spirit of Leighton, and so applicable, moreover, to the times, that we cannot forbear to quote them.

'There is a tendency in the external religious effort of this age to *stand in the place* of prayer and the study of the Bible, instead of *proceeding from* the steady performance of those duties, as their inevitable, legitimate result. Our religion, then, is in danger of becoming bustling and superficial.'

'Our danger is that of neglecting prayer and the Bible, the only means that can fit us for usefulness, and of entering on external effort, too much because the general current sets that way, and to be consistent we must go with it, whether our hearts are humble, broken, and contrite, or not. We are in danger of endeavouring to promote revivals, not because, by the acquisition of scriptural wisdom, and by habits of fervent, frequent, persevering prayer, our heads and hearts are prepared for it, and would naturally *constrain* us to it, but because others are working, the world is busy, and we ask, what will men say of us. "*La société, la société!*" says Madame De Staël, (and oh how much melancholy truth there is in it, even in regard to social religious effort,) "*comme elle rend le cœur dur et l'esprit frivole! comme elle fait vivre pour ce que l'on dira de vous!*" Society, society! how it renders the heart hard and the mind frivolous! *how it makes you live for what people will say of you!*" — pp. iii, iv.

And in coincidence with these views, which we wish might be considered by all whom in any degree they concern, Mr. Cheever, in remarking on Leighton's familiarity with the Scriptures, and the appositeness no less than frequency of his use of them, thus observes:

'Christians of the seventeenth century *meditated* much more on the Bible than we do now. We are too exclusively external, busy, *revival* Christians; they were thoughtful, inward, *biblical* Christians. They were formed to the stature of men so perfect in Christ Jesus, by much prayer, and long and quiet meditation

on the word of God. They received the grace of God, and it grew like peach trees with a southern exposure, and the fruit was rich, mellow, beautiful. Now "the tender plant in a strange unkindly soil" is exposed to all manner of storms and tempests (at least of temptation by growing for the observance of others) before it has become sufficiently indurated; it is not left long enough in the nursery, to expand quietly and happily beneath the beams of the sun of righteousness; and in our worldly, unwise haste, the fruit is plucked before it is ripe.'

Humility and heavenly-mindedness were the characteristics of Leighton. He understood the Apostle's meaning when he said, 'to be spiritually-minded is life and peace,' and he sought to obtain the blessing by 'having his conversation in heaven.' We admire his spirituality, we reverence his piety; but we cannot give unqualified praise to the means by which he sought to preserve them. He withdrew himself from public affairs, and quitted stations of honor and of duty, which were to be filled by some one, and by whom so well as himself? In the bishopric of Dunblane or of Glasgow, and especially at the head of the University, his piety and sanctity, his genius and learning, might have exerted a precious influence, and availed beyond any mere human power, to correct the very abuses he lamented. But he resigned them all out of impatience of the times. We can commend him with safety only in the confidence, that his example would not often be imitated; for men in general, and even good men, affect nothing so little as seclusion and obscurity. We rejoice that it is so, and for the same reasons must confess, that there must be some defect in an example, which, being generally imitated, would sacrifice some of the most important interests of society, and leave unperformed, or that which is nearly as bad, performed by unworthy or incompetent hands, its most responsible duties. Admitting that the susceptible conscience of Leighton found the fulfillment of his trusts in those stormy times incompatible with his high principles; that he was called, at the head of his church and as the servant of his sovereign, to do, or forbear, or even to suffer much that his judgment or inclination, or even his conscience, could not approve; yet who could more successfully have resisted than he? We are commanded to use the world as not abusing it. Our Saviour himself does not pray for his disciples that they may be taken out of the world, but that, being sanctified by the truth, they may be kept from the evil. And in estimat-



ing the comparative virtue of those who withdraw themselves from the busy scenes of life, that they may escape its corruptions, and those, who, amidst arduous duties and strong temptations, maintain their integrity, who will deny that the harder struggle, and therefore the higher honor, belongs to the latter?

Besides, God himself, as the sovereign arbiter, has appointed our lot, not for ourselves alone, but for his own great purposes. It is his pleasure that to eminent gifts there shall be high vocations, from which he, to whom they are committed, may not be excused. And it is not more lawful to such an one to withdraw from his station, than to the soldier in the day of battle, from the place assigned him by his general.

Neither is that in our judgment the most just or acceptable piety, which disposes us to speak of the world as a desert, and life as a burden of which we should gladly be rid. For the world is God's, and life is his gift. It was an ardent love of holiness, and earnest aspirations for a world in which alone it could be perfected, that suggested to Leighton what might otherwise be interpreted as absolute impatience of life. Yet we should have preferred, as comporting better with the cheerful hopes of the Christian, some other signature in his letters to his friend, than that of 'poor weary brother,' or of 'your weary fellow pilgrim.' His preference also, which was granted him, of dying in an inn, might have suited well enough a recluse, or a hermit, who had no family to soothe or comfort him, or on whom to bestow his dying blessing. But what Christian parent, or child, or brother will not cherish it among his hopes, and anticipate it as a privilege, to die at home in the arms of his kindred, and to be gathered with his fathers. It was Jacob who acknowledged himself but a pilgrim, whose days had been few and evil; yet it was the dying charge of this venerable patriarch to his sons, as they stood around his death-bed, 'Bury me with my fathers.'

The humility, which pervaded the soul of Leighton, and was in truth one of its most becoming ornaments, probably persuaded him, that others were better qualified than himself to struggle with difficulties, and that therefore he was at liberty to retire. But the times demanded him, and he should have yielded his inclinations, with himself, to the times. That

he possessed eminent gifts for action, as well as for contemplation, that he had within him that, which could sway the minds of men and give a direction to affairs, is evident from the eagerness with which he was sought and the reluctance with which his resignation of his charge, after being repeatedly refused, was finally accepted by the king. In dismissing therefore all public care and seeking his beloved retirement, he did precisely what multitudes of men, not to be named with Leighton, are continually doing. He yielded himself to his strong propensity ; and left to others the weight of burdens, which they indeed might have been ready enough to take with the honor, but which, with him, it would have demanded a martyr's spirit to bear. To them he incurred the obligation, which the recluse and contemplative all owe to the superior energy and courage of the active, the liberty to be at rest. They should be thankful for the privilege. It gives them something of the same participation in the blessings of society, though certainly on very different conditions, as the unbeliever, who lives in a Christian community, has in the blessings of Christianity. As the one unconsciously partakes of the peace, security, and social order, which are among the good influences of a system he rejects, so the other shares in the benefits, which come to families and communities from services which they do not render ; from the fulfillment of duties, which they leave to others to perform. We do not fear being misunderstood, if we draw an illustration of this from an honored example. It was well for Mary that she preferred to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to his words. It was wise ; and her Master pronounced his blessing on her choice. Yet some one must have served ; and Mary was indebted to the more stirring virtues of Martha, mingled unhappily with an excess of solicitude, for the leisure and privilege she enjoyed.

But, after all, the great danger is from worldliness ; and where one errs from quietism, thousands are in hazard of their souls from the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the madness of sinful pleasure. It is their character 'that they mind earthly things.' And it is of such that the Apostle speaks when he says, 'I have told you before, and I now tell you, even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ.' Leighton looked upon such with the same compassion. The times in which he lived,

especially the sorrows of his early youth, the persecutions inflicted by a most iniquitous sentence upon his aged father, the image of whose sufferings was never lost from his filial heart; the distractions of the kingdom and of the church; the fate of his unfortunate king, to whom he was a loyal subject; the disorders of the commonwealth; the profligacy of the court and the general corruption of manners, which followed the restoration of the heartless and unprincipled Charles, — all conspired with Leighton's natural tendencies to produce a disgust with the world, and the world's glory, and to persuade him, as he labored eloquently to persuade others, that every thing short of God and Heaven was but vanity and a fleeting show.

'Were I allowed to speak freely,' says he, in an address to his students, 'of the affairs of human life, even those, that are accounted of the highest importance, and transacted with the greatest eagerness, I should be apt to say, that a great noise is made about trifles. I should place in the same rank with this philosophical convention of yours the most famous councils and general assemblies of princes and great men; and say of their golden crowns, as well as of your crowns of laurel, that they are things of no value and not worth the purchasing. All, that we see, all that we do, all that we are, are but mere dreams; and if we are not sensible of this truth it is because we are asleep.'

In turning to his works, there are none in which he has expressed these truths with more eloquence and beauty, and stamped the prevailing character of his own mind, than in his valedictory addresses to the students of Edinburgh, when conferring on them the honors of the University, and sending them forth with his blessing. He gives them, indeed, but discouraging views of the world upon which they were entering; and we cannot but think, regarding the occasion, — commencement-day, — and the natural ardor and hope of youth, his strain must have seemed to them as of one, who sung dirges at a wedding. But, for spirituality of sentiment, for beauty of expression, for tenderness and pathos, they cannot be exceeded. They are the parting words of a father to his children; and the prayers, that follow them, are the prayers of a seraph breathing the very air of heaven.

There is something so spiritual in Leighton, and even what in another would seem like monastic austerity is min-

gled in him with a tenderness and heavenly-mindedness so rare in one who had attained his fame and honors, that it is difficult to do any thing but admire. Yet we do not fear we shall incur the charge of unnecessary fault-finding, — that besetting sin of critics, — in these remarks upon his exhortations to the ‘young gentlemen of Edinburgh,’ when the following extracts from them are considered.

‘As to *this little farce* of yours,’ says he, in the commencement of one of them, ‘it is now very near a conclusion, and you are upon the point of applying to the spectators for their applause. Yet I will not allow myself to doubt, but you are very sensible that there is indeed nothing in it.’ Again: ‘It would be very improper as the evening approaches, to detain you with a long discourse when you are already more than enough fatigued. I shall, therefore, only put you in mind of one thing. Let not this *solemn toy*, however agreeable to youthful minds, so far impose upon you, as to set you a dreaming of great advantages and pleasures to be met with in this new period of life you are entering upon.’

And, at the close of another commencement-day, still addressing his young gentlemen, he says,

‘This day, which has been the object of your earnest wishes, throughout the course of four whole years, is now almost over, and hastening to a close. What has it produced for your advantage? I will not take the liberty to depreciate too much your past studies, the specimens you have given of your abilities, and the degree that has been conferred upon you. But this I may say, without offence, the most of those things we greedily catch at, and labor most earnestly to obtain, is a demonstrative truth of that great paradox, “that there is a vacuity in the nature of things.” Though this day is marked with more than ordinary solemnity, it is, after all, the conclusion of a number of days that have been idly spent. But O! how glorious must be that blessed day, which such as are dear to God long for, and constantly wait with a kind of impatience, until it dawn, and the shadows flee away.’

Now who can doubt, that the impatience and vanity of youth need to be repressed, and perhaps never more than on commencement-day; when, if ever, they are disposed to think more highly of themselves, than they can persuade others to think of them. Still, when we consider the interest of that occasion, the ardent hopes it inspires in all generous



minds, and especially, the good impulse it may give to their future efforts, and even to their whole lives, as the beginnings of their strength, and the openings of a useful and honorable career, such dark views of life appear to us somewhat out of place. What did our blessed Master? He knew well the dangers to which his disciples were to be exposed. He knew, also, the feebleness of their faith and their faltering courage, yet he would not pray, 'that they should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil.' Neither would he have them fast as long as he was with them; for he foresaw, that the days were coming, when he should be taken away, and their hearts then would have sorrow. Let the young be admonished faithfully of their dangers. But they are not to forget, nor should they be encouraged to forget, that it is on the theatre of the world they are to act their parts, to approve themselves to God and their fellow-men, and to work out their salvation.

Many of our readers will remember, and not a few with a filial gratitude, the paternal affection, with which the late President of Harvard University [Dr. Kirkland] was accustomed to commit the students on the commencement-day to the care and blessing of Heaven; the kind minglings of encouragement and caution, with which he would advert to their coming destiny; and the fulness and fervor of his prayer, that, amidst their unknown dangers and griefs, their lives and their labors might be a sacrifice, sending forth a savour

'Sweet to the world and grateful to the skies.'

We will here copy the last exhortation which Leighton delivered previous to his resignation of his place as Principal of the University. And we select it not so much for its eloquence, in which it is inferior to some others, as for its exhibition of those 'great and uncontroverted articles' of Christian faith, which Leighton deemed essential; and in which, we believe, all true Christians will heartily concur.

'Though this, I imagine, is the last address I shall ever have occasion to make you, I will not detain you long from your studies, nor encroach on the time allowed you for recreation. This is, to be sure, the first time that some of you have heard me; but I have a great many others to bear witness of the

constant design of all my dissertations in this place. They will testify, that the intention of all my discourses was, *that the form of sound words*, that is, the Christian doctrine, and consequently the fear and love of God, might not only be impressed, but also engraven, upon your hearts in lasting and indelible characters; and that you might not only admit as a truth, but also pay the highest regard to this indisputable maxim, "That piety and religion are the only real good among men." Moreover, that your minds might be the less encumbered in their application to this grand study of religion, and the more expeditious in their progress therein, I constantly endeavoured, with all possible warmth, to divert you from those barren and thorny questions and disputes that have infected the whole of theology; and this at a time when the greatest part of divines and professors, and those of no small reputation, engaging furiously in such controversies, have split into parties, and unhappily divided the whole world. It was my constant practice to establish those great and uncontroverted articles of our holy religion, which are but few and clear; some part whereof are confirmed by the common consent of nations, and of all the human race; and all the rest, by the unanimous voice of the whole Christian world. Of the first sort are those we have often advanced in treating of the being and perfections of the One Supreme and Eternal principle, and the production of all things by Him; the continual preservation and government of the world by His providence; the law of God given to mankind, and the rewards and punishments annexed to it. The other class of the grand articles of religion, are indeed peculiar to Christian philosophy, but believed in common by all the professors of that religion. These are the great foundations of our faith, and of all our hope and joy, with regard to the incarnation of the Son of God, his death and resurrection for the destruction of sin, and consequently of death; his ascension into the highest heavens with that same flesh of ours in which he died, and his exaltation there above all ranks of angels, dominions, and thrones, &c.; whence we expect he will return in great glory in that day, when he will be glorious in all his saints, and admired in those that believe. As many, therefore, as desire to receive him in this last manifestation, with joy and exultation, must of necessity be holy, and, in conformity to their most perfect and glorious Head, sober, pious, upright, and live in full contempt of this perishing transitory world, their own mortal flesh, and the sordid pleasures of both; in a word all the enjoyments which the mean and servile admire, they must trample under foot and despise. For, whoever will

strive for this victory, and strive so as at last to obtain it, the Lord will own for his servant, and the great Master will acknowledge him for his disciple. He will attain a likeness to God in this earth, and, after a short conflict, will triumph in the Divine presence for ever. These are the doctrines which it is our interest to know, and in the observation of which our happiness will be secured. To these you will turn your thoughts, young gentlemen, if you are wise; nay, to these you ought to give due attention, that you may be wise.' — pp. 554, 555.

Of Leighton's eloquence in the pulpit we have the testimony of one who heard him, and who was himself among the most eloquent and popular preachers of his day.\* 'He had a sublime strain in preaching, with so grave a gesture and such a majesty of thought, of language, and pronunciation, that I never once saw a wandering eye, where he preached, and have often seen whole assemblies dissolved in tears before him.' His looks and manner in speaking are represented as expressive of the ardor and tenderness of his soul; and, 'so lasting,' says Jerment in his memoir, 'was the impression of his manner on the minds of his hearers, that one of them declared at the distance of thirty years that the image of Leighton in the pulpit was clearly before his eyes.'

Of the moderation and disinterestedness of this exemplary bishop in exercising his right of patronage, or of appointing to certain livings within his diocese, — a part of the Episcopal authority too often abused to the most selfish purposes of family aggrandizement or of personal ambition, and among the most fruitful sources of complaint at the present day, — we have a fine attestation in a letter written by Leighton himself to the parishioners of a church, the presentation to which was absolutely in his gift. We copy it from Jerment.

'Worthy Gentlemen and Friends,

'Being informed, that it is my duty to present a person fit for the charge of the ministry now vacant with you, I have thought of one, whose integrity and piety I am so fully persuaded of, that I dare confidently recommend him to you as

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\* Dr. Burnet, the Bishop of Salisbury, author of the 'History of the Reformation' and of many other valuable works.

one who, if the hand of God do bind that work upon him amongst you, is likely, through the blessing of the same hand, to be very serviceable to the building up of your souls heavenwards, but is as far from suffering himself to be obtruded, as I am from obtruding any upon you; so that, unless you invite him to preach, and after hearing him, declare your consent and desire towards his embracing of the call, you may be secure from the trouble of hearing any further concerning him, either from himself or me; and if you please to let me know your mind, your reasonable satisfaction shall be to my utmost power endeavoured by

‘Your affectionate Friend  
and humble Servant,

R. LEIGHTON.’

This considerate and generous conduct, so worthy of a Christian bishop, will appear the more honorable, when it is recollected, that even to the present day there are not twenty churches within the establishment of Scotland, that have the privilege of choosing their own ministers;—that the right of election, as vested in the patron or the body who holds it, whether it be the crown, the magistrate, the university, or an individual, is absolute, and may by law be enforced without reference to the people; and that not only in Leighton’s troubled times, but within the memory of the present generation, instances have occurred, in which that power has been urged with so little regard, nay, in such violent opposition to the wishes of the people, that a military force has been necessary at the institution or ordination of the minister, to maintain the peace of the parish, and to give him legal possession of his place. It is, it will be observed, of the Presbyterian, or the established church of Scotland that we now speak. But whether of ‘the kirk,’ or of Episcopacy, or any other form of the religion of the Prince of Peace, we may surely say of such a resort to the arm of flesh,

‘Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis  
Tempus eget.’

We have spoken with its deserved commendation of the memoir prefixed to this volume, excepting only, as we have said, a somewhat indiscriminate admiration of the author’s subject, naturally enough inspired by contemplation of a character like Leighton’s. We have not adverted to the



uncourteous reflection upon Unitarians respecting their views of the Old Testament, which probably originated in his imputing the opinions of an individual to the whole body, and which we may hope he would not have indiscriminately applied, or on second thoughts, perhaps, would prefer to see wholly expunged.

In the more copious and historical memoir of Mr. Jerment, accompanying the complete edition of Leighton's works, the title of which we have placed, with that of the Selection, at the head of this article, our readers will find a detailed narrative of the events of his troubled life. And in the sweetness and tranquillity of the spirit he maintained amidst all his trials; the fervor of his piety and the closeness of his walk with God; in his severe judgment of himself and his boundless charity for the rest, even the worst, of mankind; in his painful self-denial, and his princely benevolence, they will see for themselves with what truth and gratitude Bishop Burnet has recorded his personal obligation to Leighton's example and character, when in his treatise on 'the Duties of the Pastoral Care,' he says, 'I was formed to them by a Bishop, that had the greatest elevation of soul, the largest compass of knowledge, the most mortified and heavenly disposition, that I ever yet saw in mortal.'—'I can say with great truth, that in a free and frequent conversation with him for above two and twenty years, I never knew him say an idle word that had not a direct tendency to edification; and I never once saw him in any other temper, but that which I wished to be in, in the last moments of my life. For that pattern, which I saw in him, and for that conversation which I had with him, I know how much I have to answer to God.'

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ART. VIII. — *Proceedings and Speeches at a Meeting held in the Capitol at Washington, January 13, 1832, for the Promotion of Temperance in the United States.*  
12mo. pp. 12.

THE holding of a public meeting in the Capitol of the United States, in the hall of the House of Representatives,

for the purpose of calling out from among the leading men of the nation a voice in favor of Temperance, is certainly one of the striking signs of the times. Time was when the question could be discussed there only incidentally, in the form of a resolution for laying duties or excise on spirits; and then legislation would have resulted, most probably, in some act, pretending to relieve the burdens of the people, by which taxes should be diminished and drunkenness increased. For such has been but too much the result of legislative policy hitherto. But it cannot continue to be so. Now that our law-makers, in the very hall of their official deliberations, are willing to assemble, and maintain in the ears of the whole nation, that the use of ardent spirits is a curse and a sin, we may hope that by and by they will have regard to the same truth in their official acts. Not that we have any expectation or desire that the cause of temperance should be urged on by the power of the law. The motto of its friends should be, we think, in the words of one of the speakers at Washington, *Our object, Reform; our means, Moral Influence.* The law can do little, we apprehend, till moral influence has nearly completed the work. Then it may come in, and strike the last blow, by which the monster shall be annihilated. In the mean time, we rejoice to find men like the Secretary of War, the senators Webster, Frelinghuysen, and Grundy, and the representatives Bates and Wayne, coming forward to wield their share of this moral influence, and give the weight of their arguments and eloquence to the great reform. We cannot but anticipate the best results from the open and full expression of opinion in such quarters. If it would do to say so, we should add, that it is a most happy union of the power of the state to that of the church; it is the political strength of the country joining hand in hand with the religious.

Mr. Webster very justly remarked, that 'perhaps the principal benefit, which may be expected from this meeting, is the united expression of opinion, by gentlemen from all parts of the country, of the effect which has been produced by societies for the promotion of temperance.' We wish to add the expression of our opinion on the subject, together with a few thoughts on the subject in general.

In the last article in which we treated of the subject of intemperance, we were occupied in striving to free the great

cause of reform from the impediments which we thought likely to arise to it through the exaggerated statements and doubtful doctrines of some of its friends. We never supposed that these impediments would prevent the final success of the measures which were so zealously pursued for the extermination of the disgraceful plague in question. We had confidence that this work would be accomplished. But we were sincerely anxious that it should proceed under the most favorable auspices, and not be embarrassed in any quarter by the association with it of opinions or measures of questionable expediency. That duty performed, though it subjected us, as we were aware it might do, to misapprehension in the minds of some, we have been content to watch the progress of the excellent work without further remark; rejoiced to observe, that however the extravagant positions taken by individuals may have excited the sneers of some, and served others as a pretence for incredulity, lukewarmness, and inactivity, a right public opinion has been on the whole advancing with a rapidity unexampled in any other case. Nothing has occurred more admirable and delightful in the present age, than this success. It is impossible to contemplate it without intense interest; and we wish to put down in our pages a record of its present state, and discuss a question or two respecting the duty of good men in regard to what still remains to be effected, and the measures by which the ultimate object is to be secured.

As regards the present state of the question, the remark to be made is, that the attention of society has at length been riveted to the subject. The public conscience has been effectually roused. The public mind sees, feels, acknowledges, and abhors the dreadful evils which it once allowed to exist unnoticed; and is convinced that, instead of being inevitable and irremediable, they are capable of being successfully opposed. Hence it has become active. It has undertaken the work of reformation in earnest. From one end of the country to the other the voice of reform has been heard, and the signs of it are manifest to the most casual observer. Who is not aware of it in the habits of his own neighbourhood? Who does not perceive that to offer grog and brandy has ceased to be, as it once was, a civil and hospitable thing? Who does not mark the difference in

travelling through the country in our stage-coaches ; passengers no longer fancy that gin and bitters are necessary stimulants on a journey, and you may find the bar scarcely approached, and the decanter untouched. These changes in ordinary custom, in habits of society long fixed and deemed innocent, indicate how deeply a prevailing thoughtfulness has sunk, and how far it has extended. They show that the familiar use of spirituous liquors has come to be esteemed unnecessary and unfashionable ; and when men have ceased to drink, there will of course be no drunkards.

The facts which are stated with regard to the sale and manufacture of ardent spirits are equally striking. Day by day the tidings reach us, they form paragraphs of not unfrequent occurrence in our newspapers, announcing the rate of decreased consumption in our towns, the abandonment of the traffic by individuals, and the stopping of distilleries. Nearly a year ago it was announced by the American Temperance Society that three thousand persons had relinquished the trade, and that one thousand distilleries had ceased from their labors. The number has been increasing from that time to this. With the increase of inquiry and discussion the conviction becomes more deep and more general, that nothing short of the annihilation of the intoxicating drugs will annihilate the evil beneath which the land has been groaning ; and the combination is fast becoming universal amongst the patriotic and religious members of society, by which the utter and final extinction of the plague is to be effected.

The diminution in the manufacture and the sale is not the only indication of improvement. The bills of mortality have been affected by it. A calculation, founded on the returns of the last year from Vermont, would show the number of deaths in the United States to have been diminished at the rate of seventy thousand ; and a similar calculation from other sources proves at least a diminution of fifty thousand.

The annals of pauperism and crime record their testimony to the same effect. In this State, the number of indictments for crimes has greatly diminished within three years, and the change has been attributed on the best authority, that of one of the law officers of the commonwealth, to the influence of the measures taken in behalf of temperance. Other causes are undoubtedly operating, which, especially in Bos-



ton, have tended to this result ; but none can doubt that the diminution of intemperance is one of them. In many places a marked improvement is stated to have been observed in the general health ; and as for economical results, it is asserted, to give one example, that the State of New York in one year has saved two millions of dollars in the cost of ardent spirits alone ; the saving in labor, morals, and happiness is not estimated.

We could fill this number of our journal with statements under this head. But we have said enough for our purpose, which is simply to show, that the dreadful apathy which for a long time brooded over the land has at length been effectually broken, and that, though slow in arousing to a sense of duty, the public mind is no sooner fairly awake than it acts with the most determined energy.

For how many years did the advocates of this good cause sound the alarm in vain, and pour their entreaties into deaf and inattentive ears ! What earnest appeals, what appalling statements, what fearful calculations, were made and published ! And yet the community slept on. Here and there a thoughtful, conscientious man was wrought upon, and banished the unclean destroyer from his family and his farm. The number of these good witnesses slowly increased from time to time. The truth gradually made its way to a greater number of minds. But on the whole the public sentiment was unaffected and the public conscience dead. Patriotism and philanthropy wept and mourned, and almost turned from the prospect in despair. We well remember those days of disheartening coldness, when we spoke and scarcely gained hearers, when we wrote and hardly found readers, when we caught now and then a feeble echo to our words, and here and there discovered a solitary fellow-laborer in the work, hoping on against hope. But we thank God we never allowed ourselves to despair. We look back with true pleasure to the passages of our journal in which we expressed our conviction that success must come at last ; and said what we could to animate the friends of the cause.

‘ But we do not despair,’ was our language in 1819. ‘ By unremitted exertions, and the constant extension of societies, public opinions and habits will finally be affected. The subject must be freely and obstinately pressed upon the attention, on every proper occasion, and in every proper

way. Temporary want of success ought not to discourage us. We must not believe our measures are ineffectual, because we cannot see the effects. The river deposits the alluvia of mountains for centuries at its mouth, before it rises above the surface of the ocean; but it comes in time to be the seat of vegetation and the residence of man.\* And again, in 1823;

'We trust that no one, impressed with the magnitude of the evil of which we have been speaking, will despond of producing a better state of things. This is practicable, we believe, and may be hoped for. We cannot distrust human nature so much, as to think we may not entertain the strongest hopes, when engaged in a contest with naked vice. In the present case there are on the one side the laws of God, the awful sanctions of religion, every principle of duty, every humane feeling, the public interest, the happiness of individuals; and nothing can be arrayed in opposition to them but the vilest selfishness and the most degraded appetites.'†

In the mean time impressions were made far more extensively and numerous than appeared. The only organized association in the country, the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, by its annual Addresses and Reports, and the assembling of the friends of the cause at an annual meeting, was one efficient means of keeping the subject before the public mind, of multiplying its advocates, and preparing for a brighter day. By other means, also, God was raising up agents in every quarter independent of each other and unknown to each other; and while each, like the prophet Elijah, thought himself almost alone, behold there were many thousands who bowed not the knee to Baal, and were only waiting the signal to spring forth. Thus, by degrees, society became imbued throughout with a true sentiment, like the population of France just before the last revolution, and needed but a word to cause it to kindle into vehement and universal action. Symptoms of this state of feeling were seen every where in the altered tone of speaking and in the changing customs of familiar life. It was

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\* Christian Disciple, Vol. i. p. 62.

† Christian Disciple, Vol. v. p. 457. These passages are quoted as the language of the journal. They were written by different individuals, neither of whom is the writer of the present article.

only for those who watched the signs of the time to choose the moment, and speak, and they were sure of being seconded on every side. Then arose the American Temperance Society. Born at that auspicious moment, it sprang to full manhood and vigorous action at once. The fields were white, it rushed into the harvest, and it has reaped abundantly. The hour was come for efficient coöperation, and hand at once joined in hand, till a concert has been effected against which sin and hell must rage in vain.

Thus it appears that the principles on which the present efficient action proceeds, simple and obvious as they now seem, were the result of much consideration, and the long, mature reflection and experience of many persons. Other measures were tried first. Much reliance was placed on the laws especially; and we recollect perfectly when we had little hope of reform so long as the legislature should refuse to enhance the price of spirits by taxation. It was a later experience which taught us that the legislature is wholly a creature of public sentiment, and that the master must be corrected before the servant will dare to change his course. The true principles, in which the minds of all who attended to the subject gradually settled, were, — that none but moral means are to be used, — that entire abstinence is to be insisted on, — that habitual moderate drinking is the source of drunkenness, — and that the temperate must resolutely embody themselves into a standing example of abstinence. A European writer says, ‘The great discovery has at length come forth like the light of a new day, that the temperate members of society are the chief agents in promoting and perpetuating drunkenness. On whose mind this great truth first rose, is not known. Whoever he was, whether humble or great, peace to his memory. He has done more for the world than he who enriched it with the knowledge of a new continent; and posterity, to the remotest generation, shall walk in the light which he has thrown around them. Had it not been for him Americans and Europeans might have continued to countenance the moderate ordinary use of a substance, whose moderate ordinary use is temptation and danger; and amidst a flood of prejudice and temptation, urged onward by themselves, they would have made rules against drunkenness, like ropes of sand, to be burst and buried by the coming wave.’\*

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\* Quoted in the Fourth Report of the Am. Temp. Soc. p. 5.

We protest against the incautious and offensive expression, that the 'temperate members of society are the chief agents in promoting and perpetuating drunkenness.' It may bear a construction which is wholly false, and ought therefore to have been avoided. Neither are we aware, that what this writer calls a 'great discovery' is to be traced to any one individual. It is a conviction, which seems to have come simultaneously to many minds in the course of a long and arduous discussion, — the result, to which much experience, observation, and comparison of opinions naturally led. And the happy consequences which have ensued, are not to be attributed to that principle only, but to that in connexion with the others mentioned above ; — the vigorous concert of the temperate, and the formal pledge to observe and extend the rule of total abstinence.

Without this concert of action, it is obvious that comparatively little could have been done. The effect of separate, disunited exertion on so vast a subject is necessarily so slight as to be simply discouraging. Against a foe of so terrible power, the strength of single assailants is vain ; it is only when embodied into a regular and disciplined host, that they can present a force in any degree formidable, or be allowed to hope for successful combat. Many associations however have been formed, we believe, adopting the great principle of entire abstinence, but without requiring a formal pledge of the members. They have thought it better to leave each man free, and have contended that there are serious objections to requisitions of this nature which should forbid their being made, while they are persuaded that the great end may equally well be accomplished without them. And we have ourselves been strongly inclined to wish that they could be dispensed with. We think that there are objections to them, to a certain extent well founded ; and as many excellent men conscientiously refuse them, and thus are excluded from coöperation with the associations which require them, we have thought it worthy of very serious consideration whether it were not wise and right to dispense with them in all cases and altogether ; the result of which might be the complete union of all the friends of temperance in one undivided purpose. The question is deserving of a thorough discussion, which it is not possible for us to give it. We can only say, that in looking at it with a scrutinizing eye, we soon perceiv-



ed that the great object in view cannot be effected except this pledge be required ; and that therefore all objections to it must give way, as to an indispensable necessity. We can perceive no hope of uniting the whole moral force of society as a phalanx for the extermination of this vice, except by the bond of an explicit pledge. And that for this reason : A large portion of the moderate drinkers, — a class, which all agree, *MUST* cease to exist if we would annihilate intemperance, — are so attached to their habit and so easily led into temptation, that they never will be induced to refrain except by the force of this external motive. They are willing to promise in their thoughtful hours, because they esteem it right, they feel it to be their duty, to refrain. They can keep an express promise. It gives them moral strength. It stands by them when purpose and resolution fail. It is their salvation, when nothing else would save them. And by means of this, thousands are secured, and their example secures thousands more, who, if left only to a general understanding that they would not drink, would be decoyed from their firmness and draw down thousands with them. We therefore solemnly believe, that the hope of the cause rests, in some essential degree, on the requisition of the pledge ; and we should regard the abandonment of this as seriously detrimental to its prospects.

Now it is very true, that these reasons do not apply to the conscientious individuals to whom we refer above. They will sustain themselves by the power of higher principle. They will do right without being bound by a promise. But then it is none the less important to the great cause, that they give the promise, because of its influence on others less strong than themselves. Every man thinks himself strong. The weakest neighbour of these excellent objectors thinks himself as capable of self-government as they ; and if they reserve to themselves their liberty, will he surrender his ? Certainly not. Shielded by their example, he refuses to pledge himself. And what is the consequence ? For want of that safeguard, the only one perhaps strong enough for him, he abuses his liberty and is ruined. Can they reflect that they might have prevented this result by setting a different example, and not feel that their duty required of them to do so ? Could it have injured them so much to give the pledge, as it has injured that unhappy man to refuse it ?

We think that this statement furnishes a reply to the assertion sometimes made, that he who abstains without a pledge, effects as much by his example as he who gives it. For the very example which is necessary to be set, is this of giving the pledge. He cannot take away from his neighbour the deadly instrument, except he first agree to lay it aside himself. The example of not using it is worth nothing ; what is wanted is the example of an engagement not to use it. My neighbour will cease to wear offensive weapons when he has been bound by a promise, and he will bind himself if I will ; not otherwise. And why should I refuse to *say* that I will do what I certainly intend to do ? It alters not my own course, and it effectually changes his.

Besides ; if he do not enter into this engagement, how many persons will know what his practice is ? It is a very few whom his example can reach. It will hardly be known beyond his own household. But if he make a public engagement, it is known to many, and operates widely ; and if example be of any value, is it not worth while to adopt that course which will make it most efficient ? Now if any man did, or could, act for himself alone, these considerations would be of no weight. He might refuse to make known in any way the principle by which he governs himself, and the cause which he espouses. But united as he is with others in the bond of society, in the midst of mutual relations, with an indefinite and responsible power of affecting by his example the character and happiness of others, he is just as much bound to have regard to their virtue and improvement as to his own. He has no right, by maintaining a single regard to his own convenience or preference, or by unwillingness to sacrifice his own feelings, to decline doing what would be evidently for their good, — to refuse the exertion of an influence on which their well-being may materially depend.

It is evident that this mode of viewing the subject meets the case of those, who object to the pledge because it is an inducement to act from an erroneous motive, a motive which is not virtuous. For obviously, if they be conscientious men, it does not form the inducement on which they act. They are abstinent because they think it right. The pledge is not the reason on which they adopt this course, but simply a declaration that they intend to persevere in it ; a declaration founded on the same sense of duty with the abstinence itself.

The abstinence springs from a sense of obligation to their own virtue ; the pledge, from a sense of obligation to the virtue of others. To their own case therefore the objection does not at all apply ; and if it apply to others, is there any evil in that ? Suppose that they who cannot be induced to save themselves from sin by the power of the higher motives, may be led to it by this, shall we say it is wrong to urge it upon them ? Because it is not the best, is it therefore an unlawful motive ? Shall we do nothing for the amendment and virtue of our fellow men, until we can make them act from the purest principle ? It seems to us, that, to take this ground, is to cut off from all sinners the hope of reformation, and to withhold all aid from their miserable helplessness. It is to say, that they must not be allowed to do better until they have arrived at an elevated sense of duty ; and must derive no aid to their infant, feeble endeavours from those minor considerations, those preliminary and secondary motives, which every body knows to be essential to lead men on to the first and most exalted. How many are there who cannot appreciate the latter, and who can by no possible means ever be led to appreciate them, until their minds and habits have been trained upward by the influence of the former. Multitudes of men, habitually moderate drinkers, have not resolution enough from principle to abandon the perilous habit. Must they therefore be left to perish in it, because to abandon it by means of a promise, is to do so from a low and unworthy motive ? Certainly not. Get from them this promise, and what is the consequence ? You give their resolution a chance to strengthen, you give their virtue an opportunity to rally ; and they soon come to continue that from principle, which they began because they had bound themselves to it. This is the natural and inevitable process in all men. An exalted character cannot otherwise grow. There are no conceivable circumstances in this human probation, under which men can arrive at elevated goodness, without the aid of various inferior principles, which introduce successively to the higher, and aid their growth. We do not know what would become of human virtue in this world, if God had not graciously allowed it these many humble and imperfect handmaids. Especially we cannot conceive how any one who has begun to decline in sin is to be recovered in any degree, if their agency is to be prohibited, and we may be allowed to

act on him only through motives so high, that he is incapable of feeling them.\*

It has been our object to state the principles on which this auspicious moral reform has been conducted, and to show that, as their agency is essential to the final accomplishment of the great enterprise, so there are really no insuperable difficulties in the way of their adoption. The objections which may be started are theoretical rather than practical, and are easily removed by application to the same scrupulous conscience which suggested them. Objections from other quarters, arising from opposition and dislike to the whole movement, we do not pretend to meddle with at present. The friends of the cause, the friends of virtue, order, and society, have nothing to fear from them in the end, if they do their duty manfully and discreetly. Let them avoid all frivolous, vexatious, and intemperate action, let them proceed with the seriousness and gentleness, as well as the decision and firmness, of gentlemen and Christians engaged in a great work, and they will see the work go on prosperously. Let them unite heartily. Every good citizen, every believing Christian, has something to do. No one can hold himself excused. Nothing but a universal coöperation can complete the work; and he who withholds his name is guilty of retarding it. Would to God that this thought could be carried forcibly home to the conviction of every member of the community. It is impossible for one to stand neuter without doing something to retard the progress of that happy regeneration, whose completion is more to be desired than any other project now in operation for the improvement and blessing of our country. How melancholy is it therefore to see so many standing idly by, not yet willing to act, not yet willing to speak, not yet even satisfied as to what duty requires, and perhaps not yet even willing to inquire concerning it! We would that we had power so to represent the subject that they should feel it to be, as

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\* The Editors of the Examiner, while they acknowledge the force of this argument for the necessity of a pledge, wish it to be understood, that they do not decidedly adopt the conclusion as their own, or consider their journal committed to defend it. Its pages are open to any who may wish to take the other side of this particular question.



it truly is, a point of the most serious and unquestionable obligation.

There is one other topic to which we can only advert in a few hasty lines, which yet we are not willing to leave untouched. We allude to the question respecting the traffic in ardent spirits; a question, which has excited much discussion, and which seems to us to be now the most important question connected with the subject. No one who has examined it, doubts that the traffic is wrong, and must come to an end. There is no moral principle on which it can be defended, and it is only in its abolition that the complete extinction of intemperance is to be hoped.

We are aware that this is a point of delicacy, and we mean to treat it as such. We mean to make no assault on any man or men, or to intimate any reproach to those engaged in the trade, or to say a word which shall excite against them an obloquy which they do not merit. They have engaged in a respectable calling of which the sale of spirit has always made part, and have only been occupied in selling what the best members of the community have readily bought. It is but recently that the latter have learned that they were wrong and have ceased to buy. It is time then at length for the former to ask, if it be not also wrong for them to sell? If the dreadful evils of the traffic be such as to render it necessary for the sober portion of the community to combine against it and proscribe it, — if it be necessary, for the protection of the republic and the peace of families, that the temperate cease to buy, is it not equally requisite that they cease to sell? Is it not at least clear, that the extermination of drunkenness is impossible, so long as the temptation is freely exposed in our common shops, and thrown directly in the way of every man, woman, and child, who goes for the family allowance of sugar and tea?

It seems to us, that this question must be regarded by a conscientious man, as standing on the same ground with that relating to the slave-trade. It does not at first present itself in the same light, because the one is carried on amongst ourselves by reputable men without question of its innocence, while the other has long been covered with ignominy. But time was, when the slave trade was deemed innocent and respectable. The case of John Newton has often been quoted, who was engaged in it at the time that he became

a religious man; and it was long after his adoption of Christian principles of action, before he so much as suspected that his occupation was inconsistent with Christian duty. This is precisely the case with many who are engaged in the sale of ardent spirits. It never has been suggested to their thoughts, that it is inconsistent with religious principle to be thus engaged. Let them think of it, let them survey the subject on every side, let them realize that they are accessory to an incalculable amount of crime and misery, and that the virtue and happiness for which they daily pray never can prevail while this traffic exists, — and their eyes will be opened to see their vocation in a new character. Is it not a fact, that very many, upon the subject being seriously presented to their consideration, have abandoned the trade; have sacrificed to duty all its emoluments; have even given up the great gains of their distilleries; and, in opposition to the strongest dictates of self-interest, have changed the current of their business? This has resulted from a sober conviction of duty. We believe that no man can fairly examine the question, without being satisfied that they are right. We are confident, that, as it shall be more and more fully discussed, the conviction will become more and more general; till, in a few years, a good man will look upon his former engagement in distributing spirituous liquors, as Newton looked on his participation in the slave-trade, — inconsistent with Christian morality, and fatal to the best interests of the community.

We do not mean to pursue this hint at present. We only add, that on the minds of those who have most anxiously and practically contemplated the great subject of intemperance, the topic we have just touched has long pressed with a solemn weight. Even so long ago as 1816 the following strong language was used in regard to it by the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance. Speaking of what they call 'the cold-blooded selfishness of the irregular retailer,' they say, 'the paltry change in his money-drawer is *the price of blood*. It is scarcely too much to say of him, in regard to the tippler whom he allures to his shop and seldom sends sober away, that he is his neighbour's murderer. He leads him blindfolded to the precipice, and leaves him to plunge into the gulf of everlasting ruin.' This language certainly is not applicable, in all its

extent, to the licensed dealers; far from it; but it is still a serious and tremendous reflection, that so many excellent men are committing unintentionally and indirectly the very same evil which they condemn others for doing directly and avowedly. We beg of them, as men, as fathers, as citizens, as Christians, to think of this.

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ART. IX. — *Life and Correspondence of Joseph Priestley*, LL. D., F. R. S., &c. By JOHN TOWILL RUTT. In 2 volumes. Vol. I. London, 1831. 8vo. pp. 424.

WE do not remember to have seen, in any of our journals, an extended and fair notice of the life and character of Dr. Priestley;—the man who wrote on every subject, and always wrote exactly what he thought and all he thought. It was impossible that such a man should not have violent enemies and ardent friends, the former always ready to assail and calumniate, the latter tenderly alive to every impeachment of a character honored for its greatness and beloved for its goodness. Few in the religious, literary, scientific, or political world, have received more varied and flattering proofs of approbation; very few have been subjected to more angry reproach and gross indignity. Yet, with all this, we are compelled to think that the true character of Priestley is as little known as that of any distinguished individual of the last century.

This we ascribe not altogether to that prejudice which his peculiar opinions, never concealed or softened, have naturally created, and which has hindered friends as well as foes from coming near enough to see the man as he actually was, but we ascribe it quite as much to the fact, that, when he has been approached with any feelings, he has been judged of by some of the most obnoxious passages of his controversial writings, and not by the character and tendency of his writings as a whole. A common opinion seems to be, that he was a reckless freethinker, a ready but careless and inaccurate writer, meddling with every thing, but understanding nothing thoroughly, and chiefly remarkable for his wild

theories and startling innovations. This opinion is not allowed to be qualified by the recollection, where the fact itself is known, that no man has written more in defence of Christianity, and in recommendation of its chief graces, — that no writings exhibit more unequivocal, though often indirect, proofs of a deep conviction of the worth of religion and an habitual communion with God. We do not say this without consideration. We do not say it in the vaunting spirit of party. We are not of Priestley's party, at least not in those opinions which most distinguish him; and if we were, it would not be in that relation that we should speak of him here. It is not as a leader in theology that we regard him now, but as a Christian in heart and life. And our regret is not, that enemies assail and friends disclaim his extreme opinions, but that they will not see how much of Christian faith, humility, and devotion there was in his heart and life. We have known those who were inclined to think well of him, start and stare at the mention of his *piety*, as if that were something which they had never associated with the name of Priestley. And yet if piety have no necessary connexion with system or sect, — and if it have, who shall determine with what system or sect? — if piety can ever be seen in the temper and life alone, it may be seen here, and will be acknowledged by all who look with their own eyes, and judge as they would be judged.

Having just completed a more thorough perusal of the life of Priestley than we have ever given it before, and with greater facilities, we are moved to say this. Unable still to subscribe to all his opinions, looking only at his private and public life, and his uniform character, we have formed an exalted opinion of his talents and virtues; and his own example would reproach and shame us, if we had not the honesty to say this, even if we differed from him in every one of his doctrinal views. We wish to present some of the grounds on which this opinion has been formed, and this can be done in no way so well as by giving an outline of his life. Every man's character can be seen in his life more truly than in his writings, or rather in his writings as interpreted and illustrated by his life. And we have now a better opportunity than we have had before of doing this in the case of Priestley. The book before us has just come from the hands of its compiler, Mr. Rutt, who edited the complete



collection of Priestley's 'Theological and Miscellaneous Works.' That was undertaken in 1815, and from that time Mr. Rutt has been collecting letters and information of various kinds from the family and friends of Dr. Priestley, in order to give the public as complete a biography as possible. The first volume only is yet published, and it is that which we are noticing. The two are to stand as the first and second volumes of the entire collection. Dr. Priestley's own 'Memoirs,' as he left them himself for publication, are here inserted, but divided into chapters, with his correspondence thrown in at such places, and in such portions, as best illustrate the different periods of his life. The 'Letters,' we believe, have never before been published. His own 'Letters to Lindsey,' of which there are about fifty, are the most important. There are several to Dr. Price, Cappe, Toulmin, Bretland, Franklin, and many others, with their answers. Beside these there are copious notes, adding greatly to the value of the work. We therefore welcome the book cordially, and feel sure that however familiar most readers may be with the prominent features of his life and character, they will find something here that will give it new interest and reward attention. In this notice we shall make free use of the notes, and all we can command from other sources.

Our readers will remember the easy manner in which Dr. Priestley introduces his 'Memoirs' of himself, and gives his reason for preparing them.

'Having thought it right to leave behind me some account of my *friends* and *benefactors*, it is in a manner necessary that I also give some account of *myself*; and as the like has been done by many persons, and for reasons which posterity has approved, I make no further apology for following their example. If my writings in general have been useful to my contemporaries, I hope that this account of myself will not be without its use to those who may come after me, and especially in promoting virtue and piety, which I hope I may say it has been my care to practise myself, as it has been my business to inculcate them upon others.'

That he did not attach any particular importance to these 'Memoirs,' appears from his leaving them unfinished many years before his death; and though earnestly solicited by his family to complete them, he deferred it till he had prepared

for publication some theological works which he said were more important, and about which he was employed to the very day of his death.

His father was a manufacturer of cloth, and had six children, of whom Joseph was the oldest, born in March 1733, at Fieldhead, near Leeds, Yorkshire. His parents were both Calvinists. Of his mother's piety he always speaks in the strongest terms. He did not live with her constantly, and she died when he was but six years old. Yet she used this short and interrupted period to give her son deep religious impressions, taught him the 'Assembly's Catechism,' so that at four he could repeat it without missing a word, and was so anxious to imbue him with the importance of moral distinctions, that she once made him carry back a pin which he had found at his uncle's house. His brother tells us, in his 'Funeral Sermon,' that at the age of six or seven, Joseph 'would now and then ask me to kneel down with him while he prayed.' A few years after the death of his mother, he was put under the care of his aunt, who, having no children, adopted him as her own, and did all a mother could do for him until her death. She also was Calvinistic; strongly so; but her nephew invariably speaks of her as a woman of great piety and Christian kindness, using her talents and wealth only to do good. By her he was sent to a large free school under the care of Mr. Hague, a clergyman, with whom he made great proficiency in the study of Latin and Greek. Not content with this, he used his holidays in learning Hebrew with the dissenting minister of the place, which shows a singular love of study in a boy of twelve. 'Joseph had soon acquired,' says his brother, 'more learning than the common schoolmasters, for he rarely spent an hour for any recreation. From eleven to about thirteen he had read most of Mr. Bunyan's works, and other authors on religion, besides the common Latin authors.'

The school at which he then was being soon given up, and Priestley himself having a violent disease upon his lungs, which nearly proved fatal, he did not go to any other place of education till the year 1752, when he had reached the age of nineteen. His aunt, seeing his studious and serious turn of mind, had designed him for the ministry, and his own feelings were in favor of that profession. But this sickness, which it was supposed must leave him in a consumptive

habit, changed this purpose, and led him to prepare himself for a merchant's counting-house, with a view to which he learned French, Italian, and German, without a master. His health however returned, and with it his desire of entering the ministry; and at the age just mentioned he went to Daventry, to study under Dr. Ashworth, a pupil of Dr. Doddridge, and finally his successor. This was not the place of education for which his friends had designed him. Their own views being all Calvinistic, they wished him to go to a Calvinistic Independent Academy under Dr. Conder. This he resolutely opposed, having already imbibed Arminian sentiments, and finding that at this place he must give his *experience* and subscribe 'ten printed articles of the strictest Calvinistic faith, and repeat it every six months.' Rather than do this, he was resolved to adopt some other mode of life. But his former teacher, Mr. Kirby, interposed and strongly recommended the academy of Dr. Doddridge. His aunt, not being bigoted, consented to the plan, and he entered that academy at an advanced standing. Though in feeble health, he had studied closely for some time, had learned Chaldee and Syriac, begun to read Arabic, and made himself familiar with Hebrew by instructing a Baptist minister in that language. Nor had he neglected more important pursuits during this interval. His mind and heart had been given to religion, and not a little affected by its power. We cannot refrain from giving here one or two passages from his 'Memoirs,' in which he speaks of his religious education.

'Looking back, as I often do, upon this period of my life, I see the greatest reason to be thankful to God for the pious care of my parents and friends, in giving me religious instruction. My mother was a woman of exemplary piety, and my father also had a strong sense of religion, praying with his family morning and evening, and carefully teaching his children and servants the 'Assembly's Catechism,' which was all the system of which he had any knowledge. In the latter part of his life he became very fond of Mr. Whitfield's writings, and other works of a similar kind, having been brought up in the principles of Calvinism, and adopting them, but without ever giving much attention to matters of speculation, and entertaining no bigoted aversion to those who differed from him on the subject. The same was the case with my excellent aunt; she was truly Calvinistic in principle, but was far from confining

salvation to those who thought as she did on religious subjects. Being left in good circumstances, her home was the resort of all the dissenting ministers in the neighbourhood without distinction; and those who were most obnoxious on account of their heresy, were almost as welcome to her, if she thought them honest and good men (which she was not unwilling to do), as any others.

'Thus I was brought up with sentiments of piety, but without bigotry; and having, from my earliest years, given much attention to the subject of religion, I was as much confirmed as I well could be in the principles of Calvinisin, all the books that came in my way having that tendency.'

His seriousness at this time bordered upon melancholy, and caused great distress of mind. He was averse to all light reading, allowed himself no entertaining book except Robinson Crusoe, and at one time snatched a book of knight-errantry out of his brother's hands with great indignation. Not having experienced that sudden and mysterious change which his religious reading led him to expect, he supposed God had forsaken him, that he was one to whom repentance and salvation were denied, although he had nothing material to reproach himself with, and led a life of habitual devotion. Yet even of these conflicts, he speaks late in life with gratitude, as having led him to think habitually of God and a future state, too full of terror, but leaving 'a deep reverence for divine things, and in time a pleasing satisfaction which can never be effaced, and I hope was strengthened as I advanced in life and acquired more rational notions of religion.' He applied to the congregation which he attended for admission to the church, and the old minister and his aunt wished him to enter; but he was refused by the elders because he did not believe that all men were liable to the wrath of God, and 'the pains of hell for ever,' on account of Adam's sin. Still he acknowledges his obligations to this society for having deepened his religious impressions. He constantly attended a weekly meeting of young men for conversation and prayer, and took a leading part in the devotional exercises. At his aunt's also, there was a monthly meeting of women, who, he says, 'acquitted themselves in prayer as well as any of the men belonging to the congregation.' His aunt prayed in her own family every morning and evening, and after he was seven-



teen he performed this duty himself. On the Sabbath no food was dressed, nor recreation allowed, but the whole day was spent in religious exercises of some kind.

We have dwelt the longer on this early period of Priestley's life, because it gives us the foundation of his religious character, and its benefits were gratefully acknowledged by him long after he had changed most of his religious opinions. It is one of many instances confirming us in the belief of the inestimable value of a strictly religious education, even when the peculiar doctrines on which it proceeds are erroneous, and its first fruits are those of fear rather than love. We know great evil sometimes follows such impressions, where there is no counteracting influence ; but if called to choose between this chance and that of no direct religious instruction at all, we should prefer the former without a moment's hesitation.

Priestley entered the academy at Daventry an Arminian, still holding the doctrines of the trinity and atonement in their prevailing forms. Dr. Doddridge had died the year before, but the plan of study given in his published 'Lectures' was still pursued, and was found peculiarly favorable to free inquiry. The instructors, Dr. Ashworth and Mr. Clark, were of different religious opinions, and the students also about equally divided on all the great questions. This state of things was altogether favorable to the pursuit of truth, as both sides of every question were faithfully examined and warmly advocated, yet always in the most friendly way. At this time Priestley read with close attention Dr. Hartley's 'Observations on Man,' to which he ascribes a decided change in his religious opinions, and a most favorable effect on his mind through life, establishing him in the doctrine of necessity, and relieving his piety of the gloom and austerity that had before disturbed it. He remained in this academy three years, and saw reason, as he says, 'to embrace what is generally called the heterodox side of almost every question'; but was still a favorite with the orthodox Dr. Ashworth, and always retained his friendship.

It was at this academy that Priestley formed those habits of exact method in the division of his time and labor, which he always maintained, and to which we owe in great part the immense amount of labor accomplished by him then and afterward. He began with keeping a diary in which he noted the occurrences of every day, where he had been and

how employed, particularly what he had read, the authors, the number of pages, and the reflections suggested. At the beginning of each year he arranged his plan of study for the whole year, at its close took an account of what he had done, compared it with what he had proposed, and with a merchant's exactness struck the balance. This practice he continued through life, and derived from it great satisfaction as well as advantage. His son tells us that most of these diaries were destroyed in the riots at Birmingham; but those for 1754 and 1755, two of the years passed at Daventry Academy, were saved. That for 1755, when he was in his twenty-second year, is given in full in the Continuation of the 'Memoirs,' and indicates an amount of labor truly astonishing.

In two of the summer months, he read the books of Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus in Hebrew, and in the year wrote the whole of the first copy of the 'Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion,' and twenty-six sermons, and this beside his reading and study. He tells us himself, that he made an engagement with one of his fellow students to rise very early, and read every day ten folio pages in some Greek author, and generally a Greek play in the course of the week besides, and that they continued to do this long after they left the academy, writing to each other an account of what they read. Yet he does not appear to have spent more than six or eight hours a day in study. It was not the quantity, but the division of his time, and his close adherence to it, that enabled him to do so much. This regularity extended to every thing that would admit it, and was followed to the last days of his life.

It is to be observed, particularly by those who have little faith in Priestley's piety, that in all the plans of study which he has given us, the Scriptures occupy a large place; and any one acquainted with his life will remember frequent proofs of his fondness for this study. However engaged, he never lost sight of it, but always expressed his preference of it to all other studies. Having rather unintentionally here referred to this feature of his character, we will give, in illustration of it, though not in place, one or two passages from his correspondence. In a letter from Leeds, in 1770, after saying that he was hard at work upon his 'History of Experimental Philosophy,' he writes: 'Theology, notwithstanding

my other pursuits, is my favorite study ; and if I live to complete my schemes, I shall with pleasure devote myself almost entirely to the study of the Scriptures. I believe there is in them enough to employ and reward the application of us all.' In 1774, while on a tour to the Continent with his patron, the Earl of Shelburne, he thus writes from Paris to Theophilus Lindsey :

' Upon my journey I have read and studied the Gospels very much. The more attention I give to the study of the Scriptures, the more attached I am to it ; and I hope the time will come when I shall apply myself to it chiefly. At present I read chiefly with a practical view ; and the attentive consideration of the facts in the Gospel history has certainly the strongest tendency to impress the heart and influence the life in the most favorable manner. The more I read the history of the death of Christ, in particular, the more reason I think I see why he was to suffer ; at least I see the old ones in a stronger light, and feel more of their force. Other studies and other pursuits, that to many others are very proper and useful, appear to me to be altogether insignificant compared to these.'

Leaving the academy, Priestley accepted an invitation to take charge of a small congregation at Needham Market, in Suffolk. There he passed three years in comparative neglect, being soon suspected of heresy, and not popular as a preacher. He had an hereditary impediment of speech, which injured very much the effect of his preaching, and gave him great distress. He says, however, that it was not without its use, as but for this he might have been disputatious in company, or seduced by the love of popular applause as a preacher ; whereas, having no attractions of this nature, he had been more attentive to qualifications of a superior kind. But his heresy was the chief cause of his want of success at this time. Ministers in the neighbourhood took part against him, his parish declined, his salary fell far short of thirty pounds, and he would have been reduced to great extremities but for the friendly aid of Dr. Benson and Dr. Kippis. Remittances failed even from his good aunt, partly through the influence of orthodox relations, but chiefly from her actual inability to do as much as she had done for him. He himself says this, and speaks of her in no terms but those of respect and gratitude. Notwithstanding his troubles, he was happy in this situation, and applied himself very assiduously to his studies, especially those of his profession. Having

come here with some belief of the atonement, as commonly held and expressed, but without definite views, he read the whole Bible very carefully, collecting all the texts that appeared to have any relation to the subject. The result was the rejection of the popular views. His observations upon the doctrine he submitted, in a regular treatise, to Dr. Fleming and Dr. Lardner, who advised him to publish it, and who themselves afterward published a part of it under the title of 'Doctrine of Remission,' &c. found in the seventh volume of his works. This led to an acquaintance with Lardner, of whom he tells us an interesting anecdote. Visiting him about a year before his death, he asked his assistance in a work he was then preparing, the 'History of Corruptions.' Lardner took down a large bundle of pamphlets and showing him his own, the same that we have just referred to, said, 'This contains my sentiments on the subject.' He was then eighty-three, and through infirmity had forgotten that Priestley himself wrote the pamphlet. It should be added, that Lardner did not approve at all the remarks which Priestley had made on the reasoning of the Apostle Paul.

At Needham Priestley wrote also a treatise on Divine Influence; executed in part an accurate comparison of the Hebrew text with the Septuagint, noting all the variations; gave lectures on the use of Globes; and issued proposals for a school. But not being Orthodox, all his plans of support were unsuccessful; and being recommended to a congregation at Nantwich, he went there in 1758, opened a school, and by various labors kept himself out of debt, though nothing more. Here he published his first book, 'The Rudiments of English Grammar' on a new plan, prepared for his own scholars. He became much interested in his school, and appears to have been entirely successful.

After passing three years at Nantwich, he was invited to succeed Dr. Aikin as Tutor in languages in the academy at Warrington, and took that office in 1761, at the age of 28. This was an important change. It brought him into larger and better connexions. In the second year of his residence there he married the daughter of Mr. Wilkinson, an ironmaster, and found in her a most invaluable companion for the rest of his life. He soon distinguished himself as a writer in science and literature. He composed Lectures on the Theory of Language, Oratory and Criticism, History and General



Policy, the Laws and Constitution of England, and the History of England. These were not published then, but used as introductions to these different studies in the Academy. He also published an Essay on Government, an Essay on a course of Liberal Education, and a Chart of Biography. Besides the Languages, he taught Elocution and Logic, and one year gave a course of lectures on Anatomy. He encouraged his pupils to write much in verse, as tending to give them ease in writing prose, and tells us that he himself, in early life, was a great versifier, though without any pretensions to the character of a poet. In connexion with this fact, he says, 'Mrs. Barbauld has told me that it was the perusal of some verses of mine that first induced her to write any thing in verse, so that this country is in some measure indebted to me for one of the best poets it can boast of. Several of her first poems were written when she was in my house.'

A visit to London at this time introduced Priestley to the acquaintance and friendship of several distinguished men, among whom were Dr. Price and Dr. Franklin. By them he was induced to attend particularly to the study of experimental philosophy, of which he had always been fond, but had wanted the facilities for pursuing it to any advantage. His favorite branch was Electricity; and having mentioned to Franklin his idea of writing a history of discoveries in this science, and being urged to go on and complete it, he gave himself to the work, and in less than a year sent Franklin a copy of it in print. During this year he had employed five hours every day in lectures, public or private, and yet had composed the whole of a work, which was several times reprinted, translated into foreign languages, and made him a member of the Royal Society. This is an instance of that hasty composition for which Priestley has been much censured. He adduces it himself as an answer to those who bring the charge; for he says none of his writings has been better received than this History of Electricity, and yet this was the most hasty of them all. 'My object was not to acquire the character of a fine writer, but of a useful one.'

It was no part of Priestley's duty to preach at Warrington, but he preferred to do it, and was ordained there with several other Dissenting ministers. Ordination among Dissenters was not common then, and Mr. Rutt gives us a curious note on the subject, which is worth transcribing. 'The zeal for

these public exhibitions revived in 1825, and *ordination* will probably again become general among English Unitarians. The practice has been indebted for no small encouragement, to the ability and eloquence with which these exhibitions have been adorned among the rapidly increasing Unitarians in the United States.' We find no particular account of Priestley's religious opinions at the time of his ordination, but believe he was an Arian. He took unwearied pains to correct his tendency to stammer, used 'to walk to time, pacing at a set step and speaking a single word at every step,' and succeeded in lessening the difficulty, though it was never wholly removed. He accomplished much and enjoyed much in this situation, but the compensation was not equal to the wants of his family, and in 1767 he listened to an invitation to remove.

His new residence was Leeds, where he was settled over a liberal and united congregation, and passed six happy years with them, finding encouragement for every kind of enterprise, but devoting himself particularly to the office of a Christian minister, which he considered as the most honorable of any upon earth. He now resumed his studies in doctrinal theology, which had been interrupted for some years, examining carefully the subject of Christ's nature; and led on by his characteristic fearless love of truth, he became what was called a Socinian. This result he ascribes chiefly to a perusal of Lardner's 'Letter on the Logos.' He attended particularly to the instruction of the young, having 'three classes of Catechumens,' and grounding them in the principles of religion. He wrote several tracts, for the use of his own people, on Family Prayer, the Lord's Supper, Church Discipline, and an Appeal to the Serious and Candid Professors of Christianity, which last was in great demand. He wrote also, at the request of Dr. Franklin, an 'Address to Dissenters' on the subject of the difference with America. He pursued his inquiries and experiments in philosophy with great ardor, and published a large treatise on Vision, Light, and Colors, the sale of which was not such as to encourage him to proceed in this course of publication. A proposal was made to him to accompany Capt. Cook in his second voyage on very advantageous terms, to which he agreed; but some clergymen had influence enough to prevent his appointment, thinking, we suppose, that his peculiar religious

opinions would be great obstructions on a voyage of discovery. This is one of numberless petty persecutions to which he was subjected. Such things however never ruffled his temper or drew from him the least complaint. We have in this volume many of his letters written while at Leeds, from which we should be pleased to give extracts. He appears to be entirely engrossed in his religious works and philosophical experiments. He began here his 'Theological Repository,' which cost him great labor. Although his salary met only the immediate demands of his family, he seems entirely satisfied, and would probably have remained at Leeds had he not had a pressing request from Lord Shelburne to live with him as his librarian, superintend the education of his sons, and collect information for him on subjects of parliamentary debate. The offer was a handsome settlement for life, and he thought it his duty after long deliberation to accept it.

Accordingly, in 1773, he removed his family to Calne, near Lord Shelburne's seat. His nominal office was that of librarian, but he was in fact a literary companion, passing the winter at the Earl's house in London, and the summer with his own family at Calne. Soon after leaving Leeds, he received the medal of the Royal Society for a treatise on different kinds of air. The medal was presented by Sir John Pringle with a most flattering address. Indeed the merit and effect of his philosophical publications are spoken of in the most extravagant terms, and gained for him marked honors. He now appeared as a metaphysical writer also, taking a bold stand in favor of philosophical necessity and materialism, and bringing upon himself charges of infidelity and thorough atheism. His 'Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit' led to a friendly controversey with Dr. Price, leaving them as good friends as ever, and as determined opposers of each other on these subjects. As to his infidelity, he wrote at this very time the first part of his 'Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever,' answering objections to religion, especially such as are found in the writings of Hume. In this connexion, he says, 'I can truly say that the greatest satisfaction I receive from the success of my philosophical pursuits, arises from the weight it may give to my attempts to defend Christianity, and to free it from those corruptions which prevent its reception with philosophical and thinking persons, whose influence with the

vulgar and the unthinking is very great.' That he was not entirely mistaken in this view, we have very gratifying proofs in his letters from Paris, where he passed a month of the tour with Lord Shelburne. We give an extract.

'I am here in the midst of unbelievers and even atheists. I had a long conversation with one, an ingenious man and a good writer, who maintained seriously that man might arise without any maker from the earth. They may despise me; I am sure I despise and pity them. I was told by another, that I was the first believer in Christianity that he had met with, of whose understanding he had any opinion. I always told them very freely that I could easily account for their infidelity by the very corrupted state of their established religion, farther than which they plainly had not looked, and that they could not pretend to have studied the subject as myself and other believers in England had done. However, I left them all as I had found them; and whether they think better or worse of me on that account, I am very indifferent.' \*

It is known to all our readers that Priestley wrote largely in defence of Christianity, in formal treatises on the evidences, and also in occasional appeals to unbelievers, in one of which he invited Gibbon to a free discussion of the subject. After he came to this country his attention was still directed to it. In an article which was published in an American newspaper or magazine, in 1798, we find this passage:

'Infidelity has made great progress in France, through all the continent of Europe, and also in England; but I much question whether it be not as great in America; and the want of information in the people at large, makes thousands of them the

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\* In a preface to one of his smaller publications, Priestley speaks again of the unbelievers in Paris, and states these facts—'When I asked what there was in Christianity that appeared to them so very absurd as to make it altogether incredible, they immediately mentioned the doctrine of the Trinity. An enemy as I am considered to Christianity by some, I have saved many from that infidelity into which the bigots are forcing them. While I am writing this Preface, I receive a letter from a man (Robert Robinson) whose abilities are universally acknowledged to be of the first rate, with whom I had no previous correspondence, who says, "I am indebted to you for the little I know of rational, defensible Christianity. But for your friendly aid I fear I should have gone from enthusiasm to deism; but a faith founded upon evidence rests on a rock." The greater part of my philosophical acquaintance ridicule my attachment to Christianity, and yet the generality of Christians will not allow me to belong to them at all.' — *Works*, Vol. XIX. pp. 310.



dupes of such shallow writings as those of Mr. Paine, and the French unbelievers, several of which are translated and published here. And either through want of knowledge or of zeal, little or nothing is done by the friends of Revelation, to stop the baneful torrent.'

The connexion with Lord Shelburne continued about seven years, and was brought to a conclusion by an apparent coldness on the part of the patron, supposed to be owing to the general odium attached to Priestley's religious and political opinions. He treated him however with the greatest delicacy, settled upon him an annuity of £150, and afterward asked him again to enter his family. But it was not a situation entirely to Priestley's mind, his habits and tastes being too simple for a nobleman's house. His leaving it was attended with the loss of half his income, but a generous offer was immediately made him of an annual sum of £100, raised by his friends, of which he would accept only £40. Other offers were made and some of them accepted, instead of a royal pension, which he was more than once told could be procured for him. He removed to Birmingham in 1780, and in a few months was settled as colleague with Mr. Blyth over an excellent congregation. This settlement he considered as the happiest event of his life, favoring all his plans in theology and philosophy. His first object seems to have been to interest the younger part of his society, and enlighten and warm them on the subject of religion. He had several classes of young men and women, between the ages of seventeen and thirty, whom he taught every Sunday. Lindsey, in a letter to a friend, speaks thus of Priestley's Sunday school: 'I was surprised on Sunday afternoon, to see near thirty young ladies, some of them, I was told, married, seated to be instructed in the principles of Christianity. This was the third class that had been before him that day; and this is his usual work every Sunday, added to his officiating to the whole congregation one part of it.' Another principal occupation at Birmingham was the Unitarian controversy, into which he was led by the publication of the '*History of the Corruptions of Christianity.*' The first part of this work was rudely assailed by Dr. Horsley, a Mr. Howes, and several others, who, by their singular statements, induced its author to look still further into the subject, and to write his '*History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ.*' This multiplied

opponents, and for some years he wrote a pamphlet annually in answer to them all. His only Arian antagonist was Dr. Price. Much as he engaged in controversy, he discovers in his letters no love for it, but quite the contrary. He seems to have thought it his duty to appear for the truth whenever it was in danger or needed elucidation. He shrunk from no combat, but maintained a uniform self-possession and Christian gentleness. Never was there a temper better prepared for this severe test. He says of himself, 'What has always made me easy in any controversy in which I have been engaged, has been my fixed resolution frankly to acknowledge any mistake that I might perceive I had fallen into.' To the truth of this, his opponents bear ample and generous testimony. Bishop Newcome says of him, in reference to a controversy between them on the subject of the 'Harmony of the Gospels,' — 'I was often struck with the learning, ingenuity, and liberal spirit of my antagonist, and I consider him as a diligent investigator and sincere lover of truth.' One of his last plans at Birmingham was a new translation of the whole Bible. He engaged to translate the Old, if Lindsey would take the New Testament, and he thought they could do it easily in three years.

The volume before us brings up the life and correspondence of Priestley to 1787, the date which he affixed to the conclusion of his Memoirs so far as he wrote them in England. He had then been at Birmingham six or seven years, with little interruption of his happiness or his schemes of usefulness. There was enough indeed to irritate most men and render them miserable, but his religious principle and philosophic calmness saved him from all real annoyance. It is delightful, and far from common, to see the composure and kindness, faith in God and candid allowance for man, with which he met constant opprobrium, low insinuations, and foul abuse, charges of every name and degree in regard to his opinions and motives. The whole country was at that time in commotion from the opposition expressed to all existing establishments, political and religious, — an opposition of which Priestley was supposed to be the mover or at least the great champion. Added to these were the disturbances of the French Revolution, in which many of the English Dissenters expressed an interest not agreeable to royal ears or royal dependents. A storm was gathering from all quarters, and

Birmingham and Priestley were destined to be special marks of its fury. Its progress and end we cannot trace now, but may attempt it on the appearance of Mr. Rutt's second volume.

Deferring any remarks we may wish to offer on Priestley's religious opinions and peculiar character as a theologian, we will give some account of the most important letters in this volume. Of these, none interested us more in the reading than Dr. Franklin's, of which there are seven. There is something in the very name of this man that never fails to fix attention, especially in connexion with the opening of our Revolution in which he acted so important a part. It was just then that Priestley became intimate with him, and they had frequent conversations on the great subject of the colonies.

Much has been said of Franklin's skepticism in regard to Christianity. Priestley speaks of it with deep regret, and says, Franklin owned to him that he had not given the attention he ought, to the evidences of Christianity, and asked him to recommend to him some treatises on the subject, which he did. Dr. Stiles, President of Yale College, wrote to Franklin in 1790, asking for his portrait, and expressing a wish to know his religious views. To this wish Franklin replied, 'As to Jesus of Nazareth, my opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think the system of morals and his religion, as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw or is likely to see; but I apprehend it has received various corrupting changes; and I have, with most of the present Dissenters in England, some doubts as to his divinity.' There is no allusion to the subject in his letters to Priestley, but some account of his death is given in a note, taken from the letter of a lady in Philadelphia to a friend in England, and speaking in strong language of his fortitude under extreme suffering, his constant cheerfulness and piety. 'Even when the intervals of pain were so short that his words were frequently interrupted, I have known him hold a discourse in a sublime strain of piety.'

We have two letters from the Reverend A. M. Toplady, whose reputation as a violent Calvinist and polemic is not unknown. Zealous as he was for Calvinism, he was no less zealous for the doctrine of 'Christian Philosophical Necessity,' as he called a work that he published in 1775,

the very year that Dr. Priestley's work appeared in defence of the same doctrine. This is one of the curious and instructive instances of two individuals of strong mind and bold investigation, starting from points widely separated, coming to precisely the same result, and then diverging again as widely as before in their use of the great doctrine which they have both established, and the system they raise upon it. Who would think of bringing together the names of Priestley and Toplady! Yet their own inquiries brought them together on ground which they appear to regard as almost the foundation of Christianity. When Toplady saw Priestley's defence of his favorite doctrine, he at once wrote to him, though not acquainted with him. We will give as much of his singular letter as we dare, after trespassing so far already.

‘Reverend Sir,

‘Condescend to accept the thanks of a person who has not the honor of being acquainted with you, for the pleasure and improvement recently derived from a perusal of your spirited (and for the most part just) animadversions on the three Northern Doctors.\* Allow me also to thank, in an especial manner, the good providence of God, which has raised up no less a man than yourself to contend so ably for the great doctrine of necessity; a doctrine, in my idea, not only essential to sound and rational philosophy, but, abstracted from which, I could not, for my own part, consider Christianity itself as a defensible system. Greatly as I admire the main of your performance, I should probably not have taken the liberty to trouble you with my acknowledgments, but for the following circumstance:

‘In your successful assault and battery of the new Scotch fortification, you have occasionally fired some random shot on a numerous set of men, who, so far as concerns the article of necessity, are your actual friends, and your natural allies. Permit me, therefore, Sir, to offer you in this private manner a few plain, but not intentionally disrespectful, strictures on some rash and exceptionable passages; which serve as foils to render your penetration and candor on some other occasions the more conspicuous.

‘Why are “the notions of Calvin” represented as “gloomy”? Is it gloomy to believe that the far greater part

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\* Examination of the Doctrine of Common Sense as held by Doctors Reid, Beattie, and Oswald.



of the human race are made for endless happiness? There can, I think, be no reasonable doubt entertained concerning the salvation of every young person. If (as some who have versed themselves in this kind of speculations affirm) about one half of mankind die in infancy; and if, as indubitable observation proves, a very considerable number of the remaining half die in early childhood; and if, as there is the strongest reason to think, many millions of those who live to maturer years, in every successive generation, have their names in the book of life; then what a very small portion, comparatively, of the human species falls under the decree of preterition and non-redemption! This view of things, I am persuaded, will, to an eye so philosophic as yours, at least open a very cheerful vista through the gloom, if not entirely turn the imaginary darkness into sunshine; for, with respect to the few reprobate, we may, and we ought, to resign the disposal of them implicitly to the will of that only King who can do no wrong, instead of summoning the Almighty to take his trial at the tribunal of our own speculations, and of setting up ourselves as the judges of Deity. \* \*

'You are, on the article of necessity, the reverse of an Arminian; and you are terribly afraid of being dubbed a Calvinist. I must own you are in some little danger. But cheer up; your case is not yet desperate. Poor Jansenius was in a situation somewhat similar to yours. He indeed swam farther into the Geneva lake than you have ventured to do; and, to elude the name of heretic, assured as many good people as would believe him, that he was all the while bathing in the Tiber. \* \*

"Zealous Calvinists," you tell us, "regard your writings with abhorrence." It would have been candid, Sir, to have expressed this with more restriction, and with less vehemence. Many very "zealous Calvinists" regard your writings, on some subjects, not only without "abhorrence," but with honor and admiration. Dark and "gloomy" as you have represented us, we still have sufficiency both of eye-sight and of day-light to discern the lustre of your genius, and the improvements which your equally profound and refined researches have added to the stock of philosophic knowledge. \* \*

'Our case is pitiable indeed. But why will not the illuminated and illuminating Doctor direct a few of his rays, by way of experiment, toward our dark and dreary habitation? Be honest, good Sir, and fairly tell us, that your reason for huddling the matter up, and for not descending to particulars, was not our stupidity, but your fear of the consequences that would

result to yourself, had you gone to the bottom of the subject, and unfolded all that was in your heart. To screen yourself, you affect to give us over, as incurable, before you have so much as tried what you can make of us. If you set about it, who can tell but, stupid as we are, some of us may recover our sight and sense, and be emancipated from our gloom and our surprise together? Electricity, under your auspices, may work miracles.

'However lightly I may occasionally have expressed myself, I assure you, on the word of an honest man, that I have the honor to be, with seriousness and truth, Reverend Sir, your admirer and very humble servant.'

This plain letter led to some acquaintance with Mr. Toplady. And when Priestley published his '*Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit*,' he sent him a copy and asked his opinion of it. Toplady replied, that he '*considered Materialism as equally absurd in itself and atheistical in its tendency*,' but approves, as before, the views of necessity. We can take but two short passages from this second letter.

'I revere and admire real probity wherever I see it. Artifice, duplicity, and disguise, I cannot away with. Transparency is, in my opinion, the first and the most valuable of all the social virtues. Let a man's principles be black as hell, it matters not to me, so he have but integrity to appear exactly what he is. Give me the person whom I can hold up as I can a piece of chrystal, and see through him. For this, among many other excellencies, I regard and admire Dr. Priestley. \* \*'

'Can you bear this plain dealing? If you can, give me your hand; and I most heartily wish that all who differ from you, and especially, that all who may commence your public antagonists, may treat you, as I ever desire to do, with the respect due to your virtues and your talents.'

When the character of such a Unitarian as Priestley draws from such a Calvinist as Toplady encomium so decided as this, we must be pardoned for thinking that there is some uncommon excellence in the character itself.

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